This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

The Boy of Mount Rhigi

Catharine Maria Sedgwick

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Preservation facsimile
printed on alkaline/buffered paper
and bound by
Acme Bookbinding
Charlestown, Massachusetts
2004

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

0 2044 011 002 715

Digitized by Google

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
JOHN ALLAN CHILD
Class of 1900

The Gift of his Sister
MRS. HAROLD RICE
of Arlington, Massachusetts

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Mary R. Jewett.
From Convent Abby.

Digitized by Google

They had stopped under a sumac

19.

Digitized by Google

BOSTON, CROSBY & NICHOLS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

BOY OF MOUNT RHIGI.

"DO THE DUTY NEAREST TO YOU."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "REDWOOD," "POOR RICH MAN," "HOME," ETC., ETC.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS AND COMPANY.
111 WASHINGTON STREET.
1857.

Digitized by Google

AL 3362.25

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1847, by
CHARLES H. PEIRCE,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District
of Massachusetts.

STEREOTYPED AT THE
BOSTON TYPE AND STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY

Digitized by Google

DEDICATION.

TO JOSEPH CURTIS.

PERMIT me, my dear friend, to dedicate this book to you; and, in this mode, to express, a second time, my respect for one who has devoted, and is devoting, a good portion of his life, without the reward of money, or the fee of celebrity, to the advancement of our young people, the hope of our country.

C. M. SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, *May* 22, 1848.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THIS little book is the first of a series to be published by Mr. Charles H. Peirce for the young people of our country, — for that ground in which we sow hopefully and with promise.

The history of the poor "Boy of Mount Rhigi" and his friend "Harry Davis," has been written to awaken, in those of our young people who have been carefully nurtured, a sense of their duty to those who are less favored; to show them that the ignorant, neglected, and

Digitized by Google

apparently vicious, have the germs of goodness in their souls; that patience, kindness, and affection, will fall like holy dew upon them, nourishing that which God has implanted.

That the safety of the republic depends on the virtue of the people, is a truth that cannot be too assiduously taught; and that it is the *business* of the young, as well as of the old, to help on the cause of goodness, cannot be too strongly impressed.

Perhaps some young persons may feel more deeply, after reading the following story, than they have felt before, what are their true riches; that, if they have no money to give, they have a treasure to impart in the example of truth, honesty, fidelity, and industry; and in the action of hope, patience, and kindness. If this story

Digitized by Google

invigorates the faith of the fortunate, and saves from despair but one of the wretched, it will not have been written in vain.

NEW YORK, *July* 17, 1848.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Boys' Sports,..... 13

CHAPTER II.

The Good Rural Matron,..... 36

CHAPTER III.

Berrying,..... 52

CHAPTER IV.

A Confession,..... 68

CHAPTER V.

A Voice from the Spirit Land,..... 89

CHAPTER VI

A Gathering Storm,..... 100

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

A Total Eclipse, ... 122

CHAPTER VIII.

A Change of Scene, ... 134

CHAPTER IX.

Harry's First Letter from New York, ... 142

CHAPTER X.

Jail Comrades, ... 155

CHAPTER XI.

A Clerk's Trials, ... 177

CHAPTER XII.

The Book-Keeper, ... 192

CHAPTER XIII.

Life in Jail — A Surprise, ... 208

CHAPTER XIV.

A Dying Confession, ... 219

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

THE REUNION, ... 223

CHAPTER XVI.

A DECISION, ... 237

CONCLUSION, ... 247

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE BOY OF MOUNT RHIGI.

CHAPTER I.

BOYS' SPORTS.

"One touch of nature
Makes the whole world kin."

THERE is a certain portion of the Tahconnick range of mountains, in the western part of Massachusetts, called *Rhigi*, said to have been thus named by Swiss emigrants who settled there, and who probably came from the neighborhood of Mount Rhigi, in Switzerland, one of the beautiful resorts of that most beautiful land.*

* There are other similar traces of Swiss settlement in this neighborhood. *Bash Bish*, the lovely fall now becoming known and celebrated, is a corruption of a very common Swiss name of their minor falls. The love of the *father-land* is expressed by the names the emigrant gives to the land of his adoption. The Pilgrim bestowed on the New England settlements the names of his old England home — Norfolk, Suffolk, Boston, North-

Digitized by Google

Rhigi deserves the name which the loving wanderers from their father-land gave to it. Like its prototype, it overlooks a land of hills and valleys, rivers and lakes. Its woodlands echo to the pleasant sound of the brooks that glide down its declivities, and in its solitudes there are small lakes — bright mirrors of the stars — known to few except the sportsmen who frequent them.

Near the summit of the mountain there is a furnace, and around it a scrambling village inhabited by colliers, and forgers, and the *loafers* * who are usually attracted about a place of this description. Behind the village, and sunken rather below its level, and separated from it by an intervening morass, is a bit of water, precious to the sportsman, for it is excellent fishing-ground for sunfish, perch, and pickerel.

On a certain September day, two boys were fishing together on the margin of this pond. One was a fair-haired, fair-skinned boy of fifteen, with rather noble features, expressive of truth, decision, and good temper. He

---

ampton, Stockbridge, &c., and the New Englander repeats them in his new home in the far west.

* *Low fellows.*

Digitized by Google

was tall of his years, and spare. His dress was frugal and very neat, though it was Saturday afternoon, when the accumulation of a whole week makes usually a frightful amount of dirt on a rustic boy's clothes.

His companion was a year younger than himself, and shorter by half a head. He looked strong and agile, his muscles and sinews being well developed and wrought by those best of all agents in such work, exercise and pure air. His skin was weather-tanned, nut-brown; his hair hung in tangled, dark masses of curls. Beneath them looked out an eye as keen as an eagle's. His nose and mouth were handsome, and about the mouth there was a love of fun and good-fellowship, an expression of humor and kindliness, that were in strange contrast with a contraction of his brow, and an expression of vigilant anxiety, that gave him a look of age beyond his years. The boys stood on a projecting crag that hung over a deep pool of water. An old oak, scathed by lightning, and wreathed by a pendent grape-vine, overshadowed them. The oak was flanked by a thick ascending woodland, through which wound a foot-path to the spot where the boys were standing It was a still, cloudy day, such

Digitized by Google

as fishermen love, and they had rare luck; the shorter boy far better than the other, for as fast as he threw his line in, it dipped, and out he drew it with a sunfish or perch, and now and then a pickerel.

"Can any body tell me, Clap," said his companion to the shorter boy, "why you catch so many more fish than I? Here I stand as still as a tombstone, and I manage precisely as you do, and I have not had a real bite for half an hour, and you have taken ten fish in that time. It's too bad."

"There's a fellow!" replied Clapham, without directly solving his friend's question. "I never before caught such a strapper as that, fishing off shore. You see, Hal, I know just how to humor them. Fishing comes by natur. Dad says so, and I believe it. The fish know us. They know there's no kind of use in dodging our lines."

"I've got you!" exclaimed Hal, and jerked up his line. The fish was off.

"That's no way, Hal," said Clapham, coolly throwing up his line, with a large fish struggling on it. "You are a prince at reading and writing, and such notions,

Digitized by Google

Hal: but for fishing, diving, and shooting, you'll never be a match for me. You come on, though, a bit; you've a dozen fish there — hey?"

"Yes; but what is that? You've full fifty."

"Thereabouts — and I am worth fifty times as much as you — at fishing, Hal. There! — there! — there's a bite — the fellow will scud off with line, pole, and all. Ah! ah! See! see! see, Hal." The boys leaned over the bank to watch a very large pickerel, that was warily playing with Clapham's bait. He "nibbled gloriously, but did not swallow the bait.

"He *knows* you, Clap, a little too well!" said Hal.

"I'll have the *serpent*, yet," muttered Clapham.

While the boys were thus intently occupied, a tall, broad, heavy-framed man came down the shady foot-path behind them, with a string of game over one shoulder, and a gun at the other. As much of a brim as remained to his torn hat, was slouched over his eyes. His hair, half gray, half still coal-black, was straight and tangled, and his face was unshaven enough for an Austrian soldier, or a city coxcomb. He had on a coarse, red flannel shirt, without waistcoat or over-coat of any

Digitized by Google

sort, satinet trousers, filthier and more ragged than his shirt, and a red cotton handkerchief knotted around his bullock throat. A rare figure, indeed, he presented for our country parts, where every man can, and most men do, wear decent clothes.

He trod warily, as he approached the boys. He needed not, for they were too much absorbed to heed him. There was a keen glance from his eye, and a malignant grin on his thin, close-set lips. Having got close to Clapham, he gave him a kick with his broad, bare foot, which sent him off into the water, growling out, as he did so, "There, go to the devil, and learn next time to do what I bid ye!"

The suddenness and violence of the blow deprived Clapham of all power of exertion. He was, in fact, stunned, and was sinking without an effort, when Harry, shouting to him in a desperate voice, plunged after him, and brought him to the surface. Clapham, though used as a fish to the water, had quite lost his self-possession, and he grasped his friend instinctively. The boys were in danger of sinking together. "Good enough for 'em," said the half-drunk, brutalized wretch. Harry struggled,

Digitized by Google

and managed to keep both their heads above water till Clapham had sufficiently recovered his self-command to remain passive. Harry then dragged him to the shore. In a few minutes more, Clapham was himself again, though still ghastly pale. He shook off the water, and, turning to the man, who looked at him as he would have looked at a dog in like circumstances, he said, "Dad, that wasn't fair."

The *father* laughed hoarsely, and walked on.

"Now that's a father for a boy to have!" said Clapham, gazing after him, shaking his fist, and dashing off a tear, that, in spite of his hardihood, his sense of his father's brutishness drew from him. "I'll pay him. if ever I grow up — I will."

"O, hush, Clap — he's your father," said Harry.

"There's no hush to it, Harry. I will. You don't know nothing about him — you don't begin to know him. He a father! He makes me fetch and carry for him till I am as tired as any dog. He makes me lie for him, and — and steal for him; and if I don't, he tries to drown me; and he would, if you had not jumped in after me. How could you do it, Hal? I wan't worth

Digitized by Google

it; and besides, don't you know that man or boy, that's stunned and drowning, will pull you in?"

"Yes, I know that well; but I could not stand still and see you sinking. There are no two ways about that."

"No, you could not—it would not be you if you did, Hal. I never shall forget this—you see if I do." The rough little fellow's phrases had not much in them, but his brimming eyes, his flushed cheek, and his quivering lips, filled out his meaning as he proceeded. "I don't know so much as you do, by a great sight; but there may come a time when I can do you a good turn, and you'll find me as ready as water is to run down hill."

"You always have been, Clap; so we stand but even now. Talking of water running down hill, suppose we fish along down stream going home?"

"Agreed. The trout will bite as sharp as steel this afternoon. I don't care how late I get to our den: late or early, I shall only get a shaking."

The boys gathered up their fishing-tackle, slung their fish over their shoulders, and pursued their way towards the brook. After walking on for a few moments in si-

Digitized by Google

lence, Clapham suddenly stopped, and, laying his hand on Harry's shoulder, said, "May be, Hal, you think me a chip of the old block; but I'm not — altogether; and if I had any thing fit to be called father and mother, I should not be very different from folks. When I have heard your father speak to you friendly, and seen your mother's doings — your mother is complete — I have had feelings — I have. I have had more than one crying spell, thinking of my bad luck in a father and mother."

"It *is* bad luck," replied Harry. "But come along, let's fish a little now. We must soon be going home. Mother is always anxious if I stay out after dark. Mothers always are, you know."

"Some mothers," replied Clapham, with an accompanying sound, half groan and half growl.

Harry took no notice of this, and the boys, after having stopped to fish at quiet, shady places, pointed out by Clapham as favorite trout-haunts, and having each added a string of these favorite fish to their sporting treasure, hastened homeward. When they well could, they kept to the margin of the brook; but, where they met with obstruction, from steep rocks or tangled

Digitized by Google

shrubbery, they dashed into the channel, leaped from stone to stone, and shouted in accord with the joyous mountain-stream.

Clapham, boy-like, forgot the trouble that had made him so miserable a half hour before. The leaden clouds, which had hung over them all day, were breaking away, and rolling off in separate masses, dyed with shades of yellow, purple, and rose color, by the setting sun; and, intermingling with the deep blue sky, they were reflected like pictures in the brook; where, set back by a dam of rocks, it offered to these lovely and ever-changing images a glass-like mirror. The boys had planted their feet on a little bit of an island, around which the water gurgled; and Clapham, turning his eyes from the brook to the wooded hills, lit up with a shower of golden light, said, "Hal, is not this here brook a pretty kind of looking-glass?"

"Yes, indeed, and a first-rate beauty looking in it now. Trout-fishing in such a brook as this beats the world. I read an anecdote, the other day, of a man who went wade-fishing in such a place as this, and got the gout in his stomach. The doctor told him it would

Digitized by Google

kill him some day. 'The Lord's will be done,' he said; 'but I can't give up wade-fishing.' I think — don't you, Clap? — that half the pleasure is in the pleasant places we go to?"

"I don't know. I never thought of it. I somehow feel better when I am out in sleek places — if father ain't with me."

"But had you not much rather come by the brook than by the road? and don't you stop and look at the falls?"

"Why, yes, I do. The brook is lively kind o' com pany; and the falls are pretty sleek, — but nothing to Bash Bish Falls. I spent one whole day clambering up to the 'Eagle's Nest.' Looking down from there is kind o' wonderful. I forgot my fishing, and went to sleep, and I had a dream there — I tell you, Hal! When I waked, the stars were shining on me. I got a rapper when I came home, though."

"What did you dream, Clap?"

"I dreamed I was lying at the foot of the fall, almost naked, and awful hungry. I had lost my way, and did not know how to get back amongst folks. I heard a

Digitized by Google

voice say, 'Look up, and see, way, way up, where the water first springs over the rock: there you must go. Sheer up where the stream comes down. There is no other way. If you look back, you'll come crashing down; but keep your courage up, and you will get safe to the Eagle's Nest, and find there every thing you want in life.' Now, you know, as it was a dream, its being impossible did not stop me: so straight on I went, the water spattering me and roaring in my ears. I saw lions and tigers sticking out their heads between the trees, and growling, and cat-o'-mounts on the branches ready to spring on me, and snakes crawling and hissing along the rocks, and a toad with a face just like my father's. O, I tell you, Hal, that scared me. But I did keep on.

"You have not seen Bash Bish, Hal? Well, the last leap of the water is on each side a rock that springs up to a sharp point, and on that point I stood as if I had wings; but wings I had not, and how to get off I did not know. There was a buzz of voices all around me. They came out of the water, and out of the trees, and one word they all spoke—'On! on!'

Digitized by Google

What to do I did not know. There was no place my foot could reach, no branch of a tree I could get hold of. I had a kind of feeling, — I suppose Elder Briggs would call it faith, — that if I believed the words, and looked up, I should go safe. So I fixed my eye on the Eagle's Nest, and gave a spring up, and suddenly there dangled before me a bright cord, that looked as much like forked lightning as any thing. I caught hold of it, and swayed back and forth; I curled up like a spider, but I did not look down; I held fast, and felt myself drawn up; and I looked up to the Eagle's Nest, and there stood a little, fat angel, just such as they have on the tombstones; she held the cord, and smiled so friendly! Up, up I went like a lark; but, as I came nearer, the angel seemed to melt into solid light, that shone on the trees, and down the falls, down into the very bed of the stream, and clear away where it winds and turns like a snake; and it was not fire-light, nor sun-light, but brighter, more like lightning of a dark night. But what was queerest of all, there was a table set out with roast pig, and turkey, and pumpkin pie, and mince, and

Digitized by Google

every thing like Squire Allen's thanksgiving day. Just then, I waked, and there I lay, flat enough, hungry as a hound, at the foot of the fall. Wasn't it a drollish dream?"

"Yes; and perhaps it will come to pass."

"Come to pass!"

"O, I do not mean your dream exactly, but something that your dream is the sign of; as, when Joseph, in Scripture, you know, dreamed that his brothers' sheaf made obeisance to his sheaf, it was a sign he would rule over them, and so forth."

"I don't know much about Scripture stories, Hal; but tell me what my going up those rocks, and the tigers, and so forth, and the little chubby angel, and the roast pig, could be a sign of."

"Not really signs, Clap. The times have gone by, mother says, when God teaches men by dreams; but yours set me thinking, and so your scramble up that mountain seemed to me the difficulties you have to struggle with in breaking off your present way of living; and the voices were God's urging us every way to do right; and the lions and snakes, and so forth, are

Digitized by Google

the discouragements in your way; and the cord, that came to your aid, is the help that always comes if you help yourself; and the roast pig, and so forth, means your success at the end."

"Well done, Hal! you beat Elder Briggs all hollow!" Clapham was silent for a moment, and then added, "Mam believes in dreams. O that toad, Harry, with my father's face!" Clapham paused, and then said, in a lower and tremulous voice, "I felt, when I looked at it, as if I were growing like it!" and then, elevating his voice almost to a scream, he added, "Am I like him? O, I am!" Poor Clapham's face assumed an expression of distress and shame. Harry longed to know just what it meant; but he did not then press him further. Clapham's father was known to be a desperate man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him, and Harry suspected that he had led his son into some evil-doing that the boy was afraid to confess, lest Harry should withdraw his friendship from him.

Clapham had yet to learn the nature and office of true goodness; that it upbraideth not, that it suffereth

Digitized by Google

long and is kind, that it is easy to be entreated, and full of compassion. Good men have known temptation and wrestled with it, and have overcome it. No man is so good that he has not felt the need of asking pardon of God, his Creator and Judge; no man so good but he has felt, at times, ready to fall down at the foot of the cross, and, with tears from a contrite and overflowing heart, give thanks to that blessed Savior who came to proclaim forgiveness of sins — to seek and to save the lost.

The better a man is, the more does he feel for those who have wandered out of the right way; he allows for the circumstances of danger in which they have been placed, and if they have fallen, he is ready to raise them up.

The good man looks on all men as his brothers. They may be poor and ignorant; they may have been guilty of much wrong-doing, but he remembers that they were created in the image of God, and he knows that image still exists, though dimmed and hidden by many a sin. He desires, above all things, to see them stand reclaimed among their fellow-men; he hopes

Digitized by Google

and believes they may turn their faces heavenward, and lift their desires and aims to the infinite love of God which awaits the penitent.

Harry Davis had not reasoned all this out distinctly; but he was a true-hearted, kind-hearted boy. He saw much good in Clapham, and believed him capable of much more. He might have fallen into a pit. "If I find it is so," thought Harry, "I will drag him out, and help him on to the best of my ability."

After a little reflection, Harry said, "My mother always says, when matters go wrong in this world, we must do our best to right them. Now, if I were you, Clapham, I would get some good place, and live out."

"I should have to run away if I did, for mother wants me to pick up wood, and father wants me to do every thing; but I would not mind running away, for they are no parents to me, and I've no need to be a son to them. They never did any thing for me but born me. But what could I do in a regular way, Hal? I have never done any thing but gather berries, and pick up nuts, and fish, and hunt, and do odd-

Digitized by Google

come-short chores for mam. I am afraid, Hal, it would not agree with me to go round and round in the same spot, like a grindstone."

Harry Davis was of a different opinion. He thought truly that his friend, Clapham Dunn, had good faculties, which, though they had been hitherto pretty much wasted and turned aside from any worthy use, might be so employed as to make him a useful and respectable man. Harry had talked with his mother about Clapham. Harry had a great respect for his mother's judgment, and his mother had said that a boy, that was a first-rate fisherman, and who never went hunting without bringing home game, would have a keen eye, and a dexterous hand at farming, or at mechanic-work. All this Harry now repeated to Clapham, and urged upon him many reasons for decision and exertion; in a boy's way he urged them, and for that reason they had more weight with his friend. "Now, let's start together, Clap," he said; "I am going away from home next fall, to begin the world: do you go, too. I begin as poor as you do — empty-handed, Clap, with better

Digitized by Google

clothes, may be, because mother makes, and mends, and manages, and keeps every thing decent; but we are tolerably poor, Clap, I assure you, and if it were not for mother, I don't know what would become of us; but we'll pay her for it one of these days."

"You say that with rather guess feelings, Hal, from what I said, the very same words, down at the pond," replied Clapham. He spoke in a melancholy voice, as if fully aware of the difference of their condition. Harry felt pained for him. "Yes, I do, Clap," he said; "and it will never be the credit to me to do well, that it will be to you, for I have others to thank for what I am and shall be. Now rouse up a good resolution—look forward, and not back, and leave this shambling way of life. Go clear away; and, by and by, when you get to be a man, and forehanded in the world, come back, and return good for evil to your father and mother."

"Do you think that ever could come to pass, Harry Davis?" Already Clapham's eye brightened with hope; and the boys, as they fished down the stream, talked over their plans for the future. Clapham

Digitized by Google

could not decide whether he would hire himself to a farmer, or apprentice himself to a trade. Harry, though only one year older than Clapham, knew a good deal more about the world than he did, and he advised him to get any decent place where he might be allowed to do chores, and go to school. "Mother says," he urged, "that a man, in this country, is not a man without some learning. Mother says he must know at least how to read, write, and cipher. Mother says these are the tools for all trades, and there is no getting on without them."

"Nor with them, neither, always, Harry. Now, there's your father,—I don't mean any thing against him. He's a master-man for learning, we all know. The last time we went to Elder Briggs' meeting, I heard him read, and he sounded and rounded it off, I tell you. Elder Briggs was no stick to him. Well, he's got the tools, but he has not gone ahead!"

"No, he has not; but that does not prove any thing. I have got as good fishing tackle as you have, Clap, but I catch very few fish; without the tackle I could not catch one; nor could you, Clap, smart as you are. So,

Digitized by Google

the tools are necessary, and mother says an ignorant man is at the mercy of other people. He must go to them to read and write for him, and cast up his accounts. And then, where almost every man, woman, and child knows how to read and write, a grown-up person must feel somehow below others, that does not know, and this is a very disagreeable feeling. Besides, Clap, mother says we are not to live for ourselves alone. We must all do something for our fellow-creatures, and to do for them, we must be something ourselves."

"Gorry!" exclaimed Clap; "I do something for my fellow-creatures! that's an idee, Hal! That will be when the sky falls, and we catch larks, I guess."

Clapham spoke jestingly; but he was conscious of a new feeling in his bosom. Harry Davis was one of the best lads in Salisbury, and one of the brightest scholars in the school, and Harry Davis had shown himself his friend. He had that day risked his life for him, and he was now advising and encouraging him, and poor Clapham felt, for the first time, that there was one person in the world who took a real interest in him, and who had some faith in him, and he felt a desire to preserve that

Digitized by Google

interest, and to make himself worthy of it, and he felt, too, that it was possible he might; and visions of decent living, and school-going, and going ahead, dawned upon him, and he threw himself back on the ground, kicked up his legs, and cried out, with a ringing laugh, "Hal, I'll go it!"

"That's it, Clap; as mother says, be sure you're right, then go ahead." Harry had hardly uttered the words, when Clapham turned over on his face, and burst into tears and sobs; and when Harry said, "What is the matter now, Clap?" he replied, "I can't tell you; but if you knew all, you would despise me, you would not have any kind of a hope of me, you would not even fish with me again — no, you would not."

"But try me, Clap, and see if I won't. You can't make matters worse by telling me."

"No, don't ask me, Hal. I can't — I can't — I won't — not now, I mean — I can't."

"Well, be quiet — consider of it — we won't talk any more about it now."

The boys kept their homeward way, Harry asking Clapham's attention to the pleasant spots, as he called

Digitized by Google

them; and Clapham, in reply, said, "It is a master-pretty brook!" And so it is, with its hill sides of stately trees, margins of flowering shrubs, herbs of virtue, and flowers of many kinds.

A love of nature is not enough cultivated among rich or poor. Without it, one is like a blind man in a gallery of beautiful and ever-changing pictures, like a deaf man in a wide-world concert-room — the paintings and the music of divine creation.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

THE GOOD RURAL MATRON.

"Scorn not the slightest word or deed,
Nor deem it void of power;
There's fruit in each wind-wafted seed,
Waiting its natal hour."

CLAPHAM had given to Harry some "posies," as he called a bunch of lovely fringed gentians, for his sister Annie, and the boys had separated. Clapham took a foot-path, which led through woods, to his home, a wretched, lonely hut, on the mountain side, some two miles from the village of Salisbury. It had originally been put up for a few weeks' shelter to a collier. It was not so comfortable as an Indian wigwam, and little better than the den of a wild beast; but, such as it was, Norman Dunn and his wife Massy were content to inhabit it, or rather to make it their head-quarters, whence to go forth to prey on society.

Harry Davis's home was a small house on the out-

Digitized by Google

skirts of the village of Salisbury, within hearing of the perpetual song of the little brook with which our readers have been made acquainted, and which, as it crosses the valley, widens to a stream as ornamental as a string of pearls on a lady's neck. An interval of sunny land, between the hill side and the brook, gave space for a garden.

"I suppose your husband takes care of your garden, Mrs. Davis?" said a lady visitor, who one day dropped in.

"Not I, indeed," said Davis, looking up from his writing. "I have always something of rather more consequence than that on hand."

"How do you manage to keep it so nicely, then?" asked the lady, "with all you have to do?"

"Why, I *must* have a garden," replied Mrs. Davis. "Mr. Davis don't refuse to plant the potatoes, and the little girls are helpful at the weeds. And Harry works in it at all his odds and ends of time, and I love it so well, it's no chore to do what I can."

"Your potatoes look finely, Mrs. Davis."

"Yes, ma'am, thanks to Harry; he never neglects hoeing them; he knows they are my dependence."

Digitized by Google

"But I am sorry to see so much room taken up with cabbages, Mrs. Davis, they are so unwholesome."

"Why, I don't know, ma'am. Working people don't find so many things unwholesome as ladies do. Besides, my husband is very partial to cabbages, and I like to have him suited."

"What is that beyond the beans?"

"A bed of parsnips. They are relishing in the spring, and my husband is fond of them. So, we never spare parsnip seed. I have plenty of beans, too, you see. The children are fond of beans, and they are profitable; they go a great way."

"I should not think it very *profitable*, Mrs. Davis, for you to cultivate lettuces in that way. Does it not take a great deal of time to tie them up so nicely?"

"There's but a few tied up, and those are just to please old Mrs. Allen. The old lady thinks every thing of head-lettuce, and her people don't make much of a garden."

"I suspect you make little account of trouble," said the lady. "You have peas, I see. Our landlord at the inn tells us, in excuse for having no peas, that they

Digitized by Google

take so much ground, and yield so little, that he cannot be at the trouble of them."

"But when it's for their own children, no one thinks of trouble. I like to be sure of green peas and roast lamb, Independence day. The children enjoy it, and it somehow sets out the day from the rest of the year."

"And for whom are the peonies, and pinks, and lilies, so well taken care of, dear Mrs. Davis, and the roses so skilfully tied up and trained? And there's a honeysuckle, too, my favorite flower."

"Why, ma'am, for every one that loves to enjoy them. They can't be confined to any body in particular. God seems to me to have provided them, as he does the rain, for the just and unjust. It's a pleasure to me to see people stop and look over into the garden; and to a poor person, that has but little to give away, it's a pleasure to give a bunch of flowers to a child, or send it to a sick body."

"God bless you, Mrs. Davis." said the lady, as she took her leave; "I could not have believed that the woman to whom I send my clothes to be washed could give me such instruction as to the use of my fac-

Digitized by Google

ties, and the abounding means of good and contentment."

It is hardly necessary to describe Mr. Davis's dwelling to convince our readers that, though in a ruinous condition, it had all the decency and comfort that energy and neatness in the mistress could give it. The furniture, though racked by more moves than three, which Franklin pronounces to be equivalent in destruction to a fire, was yet decent, and indicated a history of better times.

There was one valuable piece of furniture in the room that served Mrs. Davis's family for kitchen and parlor — a capacious old-fashioned bureau, surmounted by a writing-desk and book-case, in which, with a few volumes of history, poetry, and travels, and some well-preserved school-books, there was a large family Bible, not a grease-spot to be found on its well-read leaves, not a dog's-ear on their corners. It had been used with care and reverence. It is worth while to extract a passage from good old Mr. Bethan's will — Mr. Bethan was Mrs. Davis's father — concerning this Bible.

"Besides the five hundred dollars aforesaid, I give

Digitized by Google

and bequeath to my daughter Martha my great family Bible, the same received from my honored father on my wedding-day. I have brought up my children — ten in number — on the milk and meat of its holy word, and I recommend to my daughter Martha, aforesaid, to do the same; and may its nurture and admonition prosper with future generations, as, by the blessing of God, they have done with my aforesaid daughter Martha." The good man's pious prayer was granted.

Mrs. Davis did not lay her Bible on the shelf, but she put it to the holy use suggested by her father. She read in it daily to her children, and explained it as well as she was able. She took care not to weary them with the reading. She turned to the Bible whenever she had occasion to instruct them in a particular duty, or to reprove or admonish them. If the children were out of humor, and quarrelsome, she found in her Bible an admonition to peace and brotherly love; if they were selfish, she showed them the requirement to do unto others as you would that others should do to you —

Digitized by Google

a requirement that lays the axe at the root of all selfishness. If they were unjust, unkind in their judgment of others, impatient or discontented, — if any thing went wrong, — instead of flying out upon them, and scolding, she took the right moment, and opened that precious gift of her father; and, in a sweet and tender, and never an angry voice, she read to them some passage which plainly forbade their wrong-doing or feeling; and then she would turn to some word of encouragement, some promise of good or favor, which made the children feel that He who gave the law was their Benefactor as well as Judge. "No tongue can tell," Mrs. Davis would say, "how I feel my weakness in bringing up my children, especially in correcting them; but when I open my Bible, there is strength and authority."

But to return to the book-case. One of the shelves was appropriated to Mr. Davis's use. This was filled with pamphlets and newspapers, one large volume entitled "Wonderful Shipwrecks," a dream-book, and a history of remarkable inventions, with sketches of the lives of inventors — rather apocalyptic

Digitized by Google

On the evening of Harry's return from his fishing, Davis was seated at his desk, with a large sheet of paper before him, on which he was drawing the figure of a plough he was in the act of inventing. "Is that you, Harry?" he said; "I have wanted you confoundedly, to copy this drawing for me; you can draw better than I, and it's fair I should get something for the time you have wasted learning."

"Wasted, father! I hope not. I have got a great many ideas from it already, as Mr. Lyman says, and I am sure I have had a great deal of pleasure, and that's worth something. And Mr. Lyman says, if any one has the art of doing any thing well, it will be sure to turn to account. What would poor Mr. Lyman himself do, if it were not for his knowledge of drawing?"

"Pooh! nonsense! 'Luck is a lord,' and Lyman is lucky."

"I should not call it *luck* exactly, sir."

"No matter what you call it. I want to send a drawing of this to Washington,"—holding up the sheet of paper on which his plough was clumsily

Digitized by Google

delineated, — "and you will copy it for me this evening, and make all these lines that are a little agee and blotted, straight — you see my hand trembles. Will you do it?"

Lyman was a young man in the village who had lost the use of one leg by a fall in his childhood. When about fifteen, he had been sent to the Boston Hospital for surgical aid. He was a long time under medical treatment, but without material benefit. Mrs. —— heard his melancholy case spoken of with much interest by a medical friend, and heard, at the same time, that his only pastime was drawing, for which he had a gift. Mrs. ——, though the working head of a large establishment, with unnumbered occupations, went to the Hospital and instructed the lad in the science of perspective, which she thoroughly understood, and gave him lessons in drawing. This is but one of a hundred similar acts of efficient charity of Mrs. ——. "What a singular woman is Mrs. ——!" said one of her fashionable friends, with a curl of her lip. Would to Heaven she were not singular, but that many

Digitized by Google

others would turn their talents and accomplishments into daily bread for the less favored or unfortunate!

Daily bread it proved to young Lyman. He did not recover his leg, but he went home with the means of gaining his living. He diligently practised the lessons he received; and he has since had plenty of employment from engravers, from an oculist to illustrate diseases of the eye, and from engineers to make drafts.

Lyman acted on Dr. Franklin's principle, — he "made the favor go round." He could only return gratitude to his benefactress; but when he found our friend Harry had a taste for drawing, and an inclination to improve it, he gave him an hour of his winter's evenings.

Harry had cheerfully promised to comply with his father's wishes, and make the drawing, when Davis gave utterance to a new want. "It's getting dark," he said; "do, Martha, light a candle."

"We have not one in the house," replied his wife, who was jogging the cradle with one foot, while she chopped some potatoes for supper.

Digitized by Google

"Have not? Well, send Annie over to Mrs. Hubbard's, and borrow one."

"If I could see any way to pay it, I would."

"The wicked borrow, and never return," interposed little Annie.

"You will have to make out as I do, father," continued Mrs. Davis, without heeding Annie's reply; and she took from a closet some pine knots Harry had collected, and, throwing one on the fire, it flamed up and diffused a brilliant light through the room.

"This will do for the present," said Davis; "but we must have a candle after supper. I have here the most wonderful thing you ever heard of. — Are the fish almost ready to fry, Harry? I begin to feel sharp. — It beats the world. It is a self-moving plough. It's all done to the moving power, and that I shall work out in the course of the night. — Mind and fry some pork, that's thicker than a wafer, with your fish, Martha. — Talk about a candle! Why, in less than a year after the plough is on sale, we'll have them by the box. There was never such an invention heard of as a self-moving plough.

Digitized by Google

Only consider, ploughs are used all over the world; there's no limit to the demand. — Cut a pie for supper, mother; we had a slim dinner. — There's no calculating what my patent may be worth to me!"

"As much, may be, Thomas, as your patent for the 'Self-Churning Churn,' or the 'Independent Washing-Machine.'" Mrs. Davis spoke with a smile, half sad, half incredulous, but not tauntingly; and, as if conscious of some difference of feeling between herself and her husband, to soften it, she threw another pine knot on the fire for his benefit.

"The churn, to be sure," said Davis, in rather a meek tone, "had one fault — it would not bring the butter; but the '*Independent Washing-Machine*' was complete, only the women-folks are so full of prejudice, they would not use it. Desire Nash herself told me it saved half the soap." And she might have saved the other half too, for any good it did the clothes in that machine, Martha Davis could have retorted; but she was not in the habit of speaking words that would irritate without doing any possible good. She had lived with her husband fif-

Digitized by Google

teen years. He was what is called a scheming man. He had a mechanical turn, and, if he had kept steadily to the trade of a cooper, to which he was bred, he would by this time have been a man of substance; but, being lazy as far as bodily exertion goes, he was always contriving some short and easy road to fortune. He would rather sit down to the old desk and invent a plough, than to plough a furrow. Wiser men than Thomas Davis have miscalculated their powers, and mistaken their calling. That which spoils many a decent mechanic had ruined him, — an over-conceit of himself, and an indolent disposition. His churn, he declared in his puffing advertisements, "might be managed by a child six years old; and a woman might sew, knit, or read, while she churned." One poor woman, who perseveringly tried it, said "she might have read through Scott's Bible, notes and all, before the butter came."

A bright vision of the "*Independent Washing-Machine*" followed the churn. The getting up of these cost vastly more. Once wound up, they went of them-

Digitized by Google

selves but, after going one or two trips, they were obstructed by some imperfection in the machinery, and, like Balaam's ass, go they would not; and those who had been persuaded to try them, gave them so bad a name that the greater number unsold, decayed and fell to pieces. Poor Mrs. Davis's little inheritance all went to pay for the patents, the advertisements, and the manufacture of the machines. One might hope that this experience would teach Davis that his genius did not lie in invention. Not at all. By this time, he had neither workshop nor tools of his own; and once in a while, when his wife's productive labors were suspended by a lying-in, he turned into some other man's workshop, and earned enough to supply the most pressing wants of his family. Davis had rather work than forego his three meals a day, and, to do him justice, he was good-natured, and could not quietly see his family suffer; but, the pressure removed, he reverted to his old occupations, and was again at his desk, drawing plans for patent clocks, patent axles, patent hoes; and now he had been a month working out his design for the "*Self-Moving Plough.*" One of the mischiefs of

Digitized by Google

the sanguine disposition that usually attends this invention, was a perpetual moving from place to place, now to some little trading town on the Hudson, where he expected new facilities, then back into the interior, for some visionary advantage. Always to be blessed. Each remove involved fatigue and loss to his much-enduring wife.

Davis willingly left his desk for the savory invitation of the supper-table, and, when there, after helping his wife and children to the perch and sunfish, he coolly took the trout to himself, saying that he had always been remarkable for his love of trout.

"Don't you like trout, too, mother?" asked little Lucy.

"Yes, Lucy, but your father cares more about them than I do."

"Surely, Martha," said Davis, helping himself to the last trout in the dish, "you did not cook all the trout Harry caught. My appetite is only just whetted."

"I did save out a relish for old Mrs. Allen's breakfast. The old lady is partial to trout."

Digitized by Google

"Pooh! Old folks should not be setting their hearts on such things."

"O father!" exclaimed little Lucy. The others said nothing. Harry blushed, and they all felt their father's coarse selfishness.

"Why upon earth, Martha," asked Davis, while he gleaned out every morsel, "did you not put more pork with the fish? I desired you to."

"There is no more in the house."

"But there is plenty at Smith's. A little more sugar in my tea, Martha."

"I put in the last spoonful."

"Well, wife, I don't see the use of your slaving yourself all summer washing for those New York gentry up at the tavern, if we can't get sugar for our tea."

"We have many other things besides sugar to get."

"Never mind; we'll have sugar plenty, and of the best, when my ploughs begin to turn up the ground."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

BERRYING.

"All was so light, so lovely, so serene,
And not a trouble to be heard or seen."

SATURDAY is school-children's holiday all over our world, and on the Saturday following that of the boys' fishing sport, Mrs. Davis had promised her children that they should go berrying. It was rather late for blackberries; but Clapham knew a place among the hills where blackberries, always late, were now in abundance and perfection, and Clapham had promised to come down and pioneer them to the spot. Poor Clapham had washed himself in the brook, as clean as water without soap (an article his home did not afford) could make him, had combed out his hair, which turned off from the comb (a comb Harry had given to him) in curls, clustering one over another, had put on a well-patched roundabout, a present from Harry,

Digitized by Google

and sowd up the rips and tears in his pantaloons as well as he could, and was going forth whistling, with a light heart, when his mother called after him, "Mind, Clap, you don't forget to bring me the snuff. You know you promised, if I washed your shirt, you would."

"I'll get it, and no mistake," said Clap, keeping on his way.

"And, Clap," said she, running after him, "here is my mixtur-bottle — it don't hold nothing, hardly — just get it filled with Jamaica — my stomach is so cold to-day. Here is a ninepence."

Clapham stopped. "You told me," he said, "when you asked me to sell berries for the snuff, that you had not a cent in the world."

"I had not then, Clap — don't be mad — you know I never tell lies. I found this, since, in dad's corduroys."

"Put it back, then, mam. We are bad enough without stealing from one another;" and he flung the bottle against a rock, and shivered it to atoms.

"You're an *ondecent*, ongrateful boy! You've no feeling for your own mother," scolded and whimpered

Digitized by Google

Massy. Clapham did not heed her. He had looked forward, all the week, to this afternoon; his home was behind him, and even his wretched mother could not cast a shadow over the sunshine of his present pleasant expectations. It was one of the brightest of September days, — warm, but not too warm, — with a freshness in the air that painted Clapham's cheek with a glow as ruddy as that of the leaves which here and there were already dyed in their rich autumn colors. Clapham, at this moment, looked so handsome, so joyous, that it seemed as if some good angel must rescue him from the probable destiny of his life. That good angel must be the firm resolve, the manly struggle of the boy himself!

It seemed to Clapham that he saw Rhigi, the brook, the sky, the world, with a new eye since Harry had spoken of the "pleasure of being out in pleasant places." It never before looked so beautiful to him, and down he went along the stream, swinging from bough to bough, singing and whistling as he went.

He had left the stream at a fall of some fifteen or

Digitized by Google

twenty feet, and come again upon it at some distance, when a curve of the shore brought him directly in face of it, where some stout old grape-vines, hanging from the trees, had been woven into a seat. Clapham stopped to look at it, and, while he was looking, something glittered among the weeds at his feet. It was a purse of silk and steel beads, and near it lay a pencil. "Ah, Mr. Lyman's!" thought Clapham. "I might have guessed he had been drawing here, when I saw the seat." He slid the purse's rings. "Goodness me! five dollars, and ever so much change!" He replaced the bank note and silver, as if they had scorched his fingers, thrust the purse into his bosom, and buttoned his roundabout tight over it, and walked on faster than before. Many, many thoughts crowded upon the poor boy. "No, no!—I will not," he said aloud. "I'm not fit company for Harry and Annie with these old duds of pantaloons, and no shoes; but I should be unfitter if I bought new with this money. No! I will carry it to Mr. Lyman, and Harry will know it, and like me better for it; and then I shall—may be—dare to tell him all. But that's no great honesty just to give Mr.

Digitized by Google

Lyman his own, to get Harry's *friendship*. If I could do it just because it is honest and right to do it, and for nothing else, then I should think something of myself; I should somehow be sure of myself, and that somehow would be better than even having Harry think well of me. Hurrah! I'll go it!" he shouted, clapping his hands. "I'll carry it to Mr. Lyman, and get his promise not to say a word about it." Clapham Dunn was a happy boy that day.

In a little time, he bounded into Mrs. Davis's house, exclaiming, "All ready?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Harry and Annie, in a breath, "only mother is afraid to let Lucy go. She thinks she will be too tired."

"O, please, Mrs. Davis, let her go. Why, it is not any thing to get her up there. She is as light as a feather, Lucy is. I can carry her all the way in my arms, or on my back."

"So he can, mother, as easy!" pleaded little Lucy.

"Well, go, child; and take the plaid shawl with you, Annie, to tie round her, if it comes cool towards evening. Lucy is not as strong as the rest of you;

Digitized by Google

but you need not carry her, Clapham; only now and then, if she gets tired, give her a lift."

"She shall not get tired, dear mother," said Harry. "Clapham and I can make a hand-chair, and carry her." The boys clasped hands, Lucy jumped on to the seat, and put an arm on the shoulder of each boy; Annie followed with the baskets; and so they all went forth, chattering and laughing, while the good mother stood at the door, her eye fondly following them, and her heart echoing the music of their gleeful voices. After going along the margin of the brook for a while, they turned off, and ascended through the woodlands to the blackberry field, the land of promise. It was a large, scrambling field, on the declivity of Rhigi, with the briery blackberry skirting all the woodland, and growing in scattering clumps about the field. Our young friends were soon reënforced by children from Salisbury and young mountaineers from Rhigi. A voice of some fortunate and generous child would be heard shouting, "O, what a good place I have found!" and then a swarm would gather and share the spoil, while others, more selfish, more wary, and more intent on filling

Digitized by Google

their baskets than on any social pleasure, would creep about in hidden places, and never impart to others their good fortune. The Davises and Clapham kept together. Clapham's wood-craft stood him in good stead. He knew every bush in the field; he could pick twice as fast as any one else. Annie wondered how her basket filled so rapidly, till she detected Clapham dropping in a handful of the largest and ripest berries; and she exclaimed, "O, it's you that have filled my basket, Clapham, and not I;" and little Lucy said, "It's all of you that fill my basket, and they are all so ripe and good; but Clapham's are the *bester* of all."

"And you are the 'bester' little girl," said Clapham; "and do you stay here with Annie, while Hal and I go up to a clearing, where there's a royal place. We'll be back in less than no time." The girls assented, and the boys run off. Annie made a little cushion of the blanket shawl for Lucy, and the girls sat down to eat a bit of gingerbread their mother had tucked in one of their baskets.

"How pleasant it is here!" said Annie, lying down on the ground. "See, Lucy, how the white clouds

Digitized by Google

sail over our heads; and hark! don't you hear the fall?"

"O, yes! I wish we lived here always. What do peoples live in houses for, Annie?"

"Why, would you like to live here at night, Lucy?"

"Yes, Annie, if the sun would only shine at night, and mother would come here, and you, and Harry, and Clapham would live with us. I love Clapham; don't you love Clapham, Annie?" Before Annie replied, Hancock Coles and James Willett, two boys from the neighborhood, joined them. "Love Clap Dunn! that's a good one," cried young Coles. "He's a pretty fellow to love, or like, or put up with any way. Harry Davis disgraces himself to keep company with him."

"Hancock disgraces hisself to say so, don't he, Annie?" whispered Lucy. Annie, who had risen to her feet at the approach of the boys, nodded a very hearty assent, and Lucy turned to Hancock, and, doubling her little fist, and shaking it most energetically at him, she said, "You don't know Clapham!"

"Don't I? That's a good one, an't it, James? Don't know Clap Dunn, and his father before him! My

Digitized by Google

father says, Norman Dunn, and Massy, and Clap into the bargain, ought to be sent to State's Prison. Don't know Clap Dunn! Clap, that robbed our hen-roost when he was seven years old!"

Annie could no longer restrain her bursting indignation. "If he did, he has never robbed since," she said; "and who was it, Mr. Hancock Coles, that robbed poor old Mrs. Allen of all her plums when he was twice seven years old? You may look mad, but you can't deny it. And if poor Clapham has a bad father and mother, he can't help that; and I don't think they are any worse than ——"

Annie's kind heart checked her, or perhaps it was a certain innate sense of the hardship of reproaching a child with a father's wrong-doing. She had that very morning been present when one of the gossips of the village had related at the Davises an anecdote of Coles, Hancock's father, who was a noted horse jockey, having taken advantage of the necessities of a poor woman who had just lost her husband, and so overreached her in the purchase of a pair of horses that his conscience forced him to allow her five dollars

Digitized by Google

over and above the bargain, and that he gave it to her, saying, "I feel so much for you, ma'am, being a widow, that I present you five dollars."* Annie might not have quite comprehended the transaction, but she perceived that, in addition to dishonesty, there was meanness and ostentation, and that therefore it was worse than bare thieving.

We wish that the principles of strict honesty and unwavering truth, in which Mrs. Davis educated her children, were universal. Then there would be an end of the false coloring, the false weighing, the false counting, the keen bargaining, to which the *greed of gain* leads a portion of our New England people, and which is — we say it with shame and sorrow — their besetting sin. Greed of gain is the besetting sin of the most civilized, the best, and the most favored people of God's earth. My young friends, reform it, reform it altogether.

Annie had checked herself as she was on the point of reproaching Hancock with his father's misdeed; but little Lucy, who shared her sister's re-

* Fact.

Digitized by Google

sentment without feeling the same impulse to restrain it, said, "My Annie means that Clapham's peoples ain't any worse than your peoples, Mr. Hancock."

"Take that for your impudence, miss!" said Hancock, kicking over little Lucy's basket of blackberries; and he was on the point of stamping on the fruit and crushing those beautiful, selected berries; but, seeing Harry and Clapham emerging from the woodland above, he sneaked off with his companion. Lucy was left crying bitterly. "He's an awful boy!" she said; "I'll tell Harry of him, and I'll tell Clapham every thing he said about him."

"O, no, no, no, dear Lucy, don't; it will make the boys so mad; and may be they will have a fight with Hancock. Don't say one word about it, Lucy. I will pick up all the berries. Clapham will feel dreadfully if you tell him. See, they are not the least hurt, the grass is so clean. Do not say one word to Clapham. Mother says we must never tell one person what another says against him; it only makes more trouble, mother says, and I know Clapham will feel so bad poor Clapham!"

Digitized by Google

"I won't tell him then, Annie — but it's too bad;" and the little creature wiped away her tears with her stained hands, suppressed her sobs, and cleared up her face as well as she could, before the boys came up to them.

"Why, what's the matter, Lucy, darling?" exclaimed Harry; "the blackberries spilt? O!"

"Is that all?" said Clapham. "Never mind, Lucy; it's no fault of yours, I dare say — it's a sideling place here. Don't, Annie, plague yourself to pick up the rest. I have some first-rate ones here in this nice paper your mother wrapped the gingerbread in. I picked them on purpose to cream over your and Annie's baskets. There," he added, shaking them over the tops of their baskets, "there, it's all neat and complete."

Lucy's happiness was quite restored. There was no vestige of the grief and disturbance, except now and then a glance askance, from her sweet blue eye, at Annie, which indicated a consciousness that a great secret was sleeping in her little bosom.

The young people proceeded homeward, and were

Digitized by Google

again traversing the foot-path along the brook, in whose pure water they had washed away the stains on Lucy's face and hands. She was on Clapham's back. He had gathered for her, by the way, the golden-rod, asters, and the lovely fringed gentian, and Annie had tied them in her pocket handkerchief, which swung on Lucy's arm. The flowers were peeping out in every direction. They had stopped under a sumac, whose leaves were already of a brilliant red, and Harry, at Lucy's request, had pulled away from the sumac a clematis that was wreathed around it, and which is scarcely less beautiful in the silken green tassels of its seed-time, than with its delicate summer flowers. The whole vine had fallen, and its branches dropped around the children, so as to wreathe them together enchantingly. At this moment, Lyman met them, and the group struck the painter's eye. He thought he had never seen any thing so beautiful. "O, stand still!" he said; "stand still, every one of you, for a few moments. Let the vine be just where it is over your heads, and shoulders, and arms. No, Annie, don't move the baskets; leave

Digitized by Google

your shawl on the ground. O Harry, this is what I call a painter's opportunity! If I could but give such coloring as I see now,—Lucy's face so lovely, so fair on one side, Clapham's —

'Those azure veins
Which steal like streams along a field of snow'—

and that snow against Clapham's brown and ruddy cheek, and that hair like sunbeams floating over his massy, dark curls, and that chubby hand over his shoulder with the handkerchief of flowers, and you all interwoven in the clematis, and the brook and the hill side, and the last rays of the sun on the distant mountain tops,—O, it is a living picture! But I can do nothing with it," he said, despairingly, putting up his pencil; "perhaps, hereafter, I may recall it."

But their happy day was coming to an end; and the young people, released from their sylvan bondage, hastened homeward, stopping only once more, and then at old Mrs. Allen's, who, as Harry said, was old and lame, and should not be forgotten. They all insisted on her taking a portion from their overflowing baskets; and, as they went away, richer for what they

Digitized by Google

had imparted, the grateful old lady wiped a tear of pleasure from her eyes, saying, "Never were there just such children! Like mother, like children; and Clapham — they are sort of missionaries to him. What a smile the boy has! such white teeth! and he looked so happy, poor child!"

Poor child he was not that day — not to be pitied. "We have had a real good time — a lucky day," he said to his young friends, as they bade good night; and he went off to sell his berries in the village, to buy the snuff for his mother, and, last of all, to restore Mr. Lyman's purse. Lyman said he had not yet missed it; and, counting the money, he said, "There's not a penny gone. I never should have known where I lost it, or suspected who found it," he said. "Clapham," he added, "you are more honest than you have the name of being."

"I am," replied Clapham, blushing, but returning his glance with a steady eye. "You shall be rewarded though, Clapham;" and Mr. Lyman offered him all the silver the purse contained.

"I do not wish any reward," Clapham said; "but

Digitized by Google

one thing, Mr. Lyman, I ask of you. Be kind enough not to tell any one that you lost the purse, or that I found it."

"Why, how odd, Clapham!"

"Will you promise this, sir?"

"Yes. But you are a strange boy."

"Perhaps I am," said Clapham; and they parted

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

A CONFESSION.

"He built a foundation of Repentance with the strong cement of Sincerity. Thereupon was placed the superstructure of Hope, on whose summit the light of Heaven steadily shone."

On the Thursday evening following, Clapham appeared at Mrs. Davis's door. A change seemed to have come over his spirit since the pleasant berrying day. He looked more neglected, sadder, more troubled, than usual. Nothing in particular had occurred to make him so; but his present life, in consequence of his association with the Davises, and of the hopes Harry had inspired, and the prospects his friend had set before him, was becoming more distasteful to him, and his wretched home more and more hateful. He felt too, more and more, the burden of an unconfessed sin on his mind; and he was constantly tormented with the fear that if Harry knew all, he might withdraw his friendship.

Digitized by Google

Norman, as usual, had sent his jug down to be filled, and Clapham had left it behind a rose-bush at the gate. He had sold a string of fish in the village, reserving a half dozen, which he asked Mrs. Davis to accept. "There is but one trout," he said; "and that I brought for little Lucy, she is so fond of counting the bright spots on them. Where is she, Mrs. Davis?"

"In the bed-room, Clapham. Poor little Lucy is not well; go in and show her the trout. Thank you for the fish, Clapham; it's the gift in season. I had nothing fresh in the house for father — he is very fond of fish."

"I wish Mrs. Davis would keep the fish to herself," thought Clapham; but he did not say it. He proceeded to the bed-room. Lucy's cheek, burning with fever, dimpled at his approach. She was delighted with the trout, and still more delighted with a bunch of fresh fringed gentian which Clapham had brought to her, and which Annie promised to tie into one of Lucy's favorite wreaths. "How pretty!" said Lucy, pulling open one of the flowers; "as

Digitized by Google

blue as the blue sky." Annie took up the word, and quoted a stanza from Bryant's Fringed Gentian.

> "Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
> Look through its fringes to the sky;
> Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall
> A flower from its cerulean wall."

"Why, that's just what I said!" resumed Lucy. "How kind you are, Clapham! O Annie!" she added, and drew Annie down to the bed and whispered to her; and Annie took from her work-basket a pocket-handkerchief on which the Declaration of Independence was printed. Harry had bought it with money of his own earning, to give to Clapham. Little Lucy had hemmed one of its sides, her first "real sewing," she said, for she counted the patch-work on which she had learned for nothing. Annie had finished the hemming, and marked Clapham's name full out. Lucy told its history, and said, "Now, Clapham,

> 'You must keep it as long as you live,
> And never lose it, and never give.'"

"Never! never!" said Clapham; "and I thank you all a thousand times."

Digitized by Google

"And that is quite enough," said Mrs. Davis. "Now, Clapham, will you lend Harry a hand at carrying my clothes home for Mrs. Dawson and the other ladies?" Clapham, as always, was ready. "And, Harry," added Mrs. Davis, "take a vial, and get some castor-oil, at Johnson's, for Lucy. Bring a light here, Annie. I must get out some money to pay for it."

Annie brought in a candle, and Mrs. Davis went to a bureau which stood near a small sliding window, opened a drawer, and took from a box a purse containing all her treasure, the product of a summer's washing for a large family from New York, who had been boarding in the village, and who had paid her, ungrudgingly, New York prices. She had, in her own mind, appropriated every shilling of it to some good to be obtained for her children. No wonder she looked at it with pride and pleasure. A small sum, hardly earned, gives more happiness to the contented laborer than a great amount of riches to the rich man. Thus a kind Providence throws in compensations!

While Mrs. Davis was selecting a quarter of a dollar from a handful of silver in her hand, on which

Digitized by Google

the candle was gleaming, there was a noise against the outside of the house, by the window.

"What's that, mother?" asked Annie, starting.

"It's the cow," said Harry, "knocking down father's model plough!"

"But I thought I saw a shadow of something," said Annie.

"No doubt; and a 'shadow' of any thing is enough to scare you. What harm can a shadow do you, Annie?"

"But there is always a substance where there is a shadow, Harry."

"Nonsense, Annie! I wish you would not be a goose, like other girls. Come, Clap, let us go. Perhaps we shall meet this dreadful '*substance*,' Annie." The young people laughed, little dreaming that Annie had seen indeed a substance and the shadow of a fearful coming event!

The boys, after depositing the snow-white clothes, proceeded to Mr. Johnson's shop — Clapham to fill the jug, and Harry the vial. The shop was closed.

"Deuce take it!" said Clapham; "just my luck!"

Digitized by Google

"Never mind, Clap; you can go on to Smith's shop, or, what is still better, take your jug home empty."

"Yes, and get a beating, that father has promised me if I bring it home empty; and this is the only kind of promise he keeps. I have spent two hours trying to sell my fish; and but for the New York people, I should not have got a penny in cash. Our Salisbury folks know where money goes that comes to us. But, Harry, are you not coming along with me to Smith's?"

"No; mother told me, if I did not find Johnson's open, to get the oil at the doctor's."

"O! but, Harry, I say, do go to Smith's with me."

"I am in a hurry, Clap, to get home."

"We won't be a minute; we'll run all the way."

"Thank you, I am too tired to run. I have been on foot to Canaan to-day, for father."

"Do come, Harry."

"I cannot, Clap; mother will want me."

But Clapham, contrary to his usual habit, insisted, almost with tears; and when Harry said, "Why, what is the matter, Clap? can't you go alone?" he replied, "No, I cannot;" and, turning off, he muttered, "I'll go

Digitized by Google

home, and take the beating, and nam will cry because I have not got her snuff. Hang it! I wish we were all dead together!"

"O, mercy, Clapham! don't talk so. I will go with you; but what is the reason you cannot go to Smith's without me?"

"Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no lies, Harry." Not another word was spoken till they got to Smith's, excepting that once, when they paused for breath, Clapham said, "Harry, you've got a *home*. We live in hell." The upper part of the shop-door was of glass. "Stop a minute," said Clapham, as Harry put his hand on the latch; and then, keenly reconnoitring the shop, he added, "Mr. Smith is not in; you may open the door, Harry."

The boys drew up to the counter, and stood quietly there, while the only clerk in the shop served two women. Clapham hid his jug as well as he could with his tattered frock coat. In a few moments, the clerk's eye fell upon them. Harry perceived his countenance changed at the sight of Clapham; he perceived, too, that Clapham drew nearer to him. The

Digitized by Google

clerk continued eyeing him askance, while he tied up the women's parcels; that finished, he approached the boys. Harry asked for the oil, and Clapham, laying down a half dollar, asked for a half gallon of rum, and a quarter of Scotch snuff.

The clerk half smiled as he turned away and went to the farther extremity of the shop, where a high writing-desk was placed. The boys now perceived that the master of the shop was sitting behind it; and Harry was conscious that this discovery caused Clapham slightly to tremble. The clerk spoke so low to Mr. Smith that they could not hear a word he said; but, as what passed came out afterwards, there is no harm in telling it in this place.

"Clapham Dunn is in the store, sir," said the clerk.

"He is, is he?" said Mr. Smith, starting from his chair; but, on perceiving Harry Davis, he sat down again. "Did he come in with Harry Davis?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, and they seemed to be in company. He wants rum and snuff, of course. He has got the money in hand."

Digitized by Google

"Well, you may keep dark this time. Draw the rum for him."

Mr. Smith was partly influenced by the presence of Harry, partly, we fear, by the opportunity of selling the rum. Thank God, the days are passed when every shop had its barrel of rum, where the poor man found a ready temptation to part with his small gains; where such boys as Clapham Dunn began their apprenticeship to vice and ruin; and such wretches as his father found the means of drowning the consciousness of misery and guilt; and where decent men, like Mr. Elam Smith, could quietly sell this poison to body and soul, pocket the money, reckon up their gains, and fancy all the sin was at the buyers' door!

In a few minutes more, the boys had done their business, and left the shop.

Hurried as Harry felt, his curiosity was too strongly excited to be deferred. It was not idle curiosity; his best feelings were touched by Clapham's attachment to him, and dependence on him, and, perceiving he had the power to serve him, he had the will too. "Tell me, Clapham," he said, "what does all this mean?"

Digitized by Google

"What?" asked Clapham, without raising his eyes

"You know what I mean."

"So I do, Harry," he answered, now honestly turning up his face, and looking his friend in the eye. "And I will tell you. I declare I will tell you all; but, hang it, I can't tell it now; it's a long story, and a bad one."

"Well, make a long story short, Clap, and have it off your mind; you'll have time before we come to the turn."

"But, Harry, you'll despise me, and so will your mother, and Annie, and little Lucy, and I could not stand it. You'll never go a fishing with me again; they'll never speak to me."

"Clapham, you don't know them; you don't know me. I'll stick by a friend through thick and thin."

"But, Harry, there is too much thick; you won't go it."

"I'll start fair with you, Clapham. I'll tell you what I'll go. You must speak just the whole truth to me, and then I shall be sure of a foundation to stand on, and, standing on that, with a long pull, and

Digitized by Google

a strong pull, and a pull both together, we'll get you out of the mire if you are ever so deep in."

Clapham began, and told his story, at first with a faltering voice, but, as he went on, with a firmer tone.

We must go a little farther back, in Clapham's history, than Clapham's limited time allowed him to do, or than he could have done.

But Clapham was born in a jail, and, from his earliest recollection, his parents had been skulking from one place to another, living on the outskirts of villages, on the borders of Massachusetts, Connecticut, or New York, where these three states meet, and afford a very convenient neighborhood for those who evade the laws by what is called *dodging the line!* Norman was a strong, well-built man. He often boasted that he could travel farther in a day, and fast longer, than any man he ever knew. He could endure wet, and heat and cold, without flinching. He would sometimes live out, roaming about the woods for a week together, and then come home, and eat, drink, and sleep, for a week. He had never been taught to read or write.

Digitized by Google

This was a source of deep mortification to him. But it was a greater disadvantage than Norman was aware of. Norman was naturally proud of his size and strength, and power of endurance, and he was humbled when he saw a little fellow, whom he said he could throw over the tallest pine-tree in the woods, really his superior, and, because he could read and write, able to take a place, and keep it, among his fellow-men. Norman had the qualities that distinguish a savage. If he had been born among the Indians, he might have been their chief and led them. But knowledge is necessary to live in society, and knowledge and goodness are the only true distinctions between man and man, in a social state. We may have an equality of rights and privileges; in this favored country we have. Riches do not make a man more respectable or happier than his neighbor. Knowledge does. We are forced to respect those that know more than we do. We feel that, other things being equal, a superior education gives the man who has it a power superior to ours. Norman Dunn felt this, and it galled him. He felt it tne more, because by nature he had a good head, and

Digitized by Google

he felt it the more bitterly because he had not the virtues and good feelings that, more than any thing else, compensate for the want of education. An industrious, honest, kind-hearted man may hold up his head beside the wisest man and the greatest scholar in the world. But neither honesty, nor any thing akin to it, had Norman Dunn. He had just enough sense of right to feel his degradation, to hate to come in contact with his fellow-men; so he sulkily shunned them. Clapham's mother was a poor outcast, half Dutch, half Yankee. She was lazy, dirty, and shiftless. She was never very bright, and so between drinking, snuffing, and Norman's hard usage, the little light she originally had was nearly put out. One virtue we must give her credit for;—how she came by it nobody could tell;—but Massy Dunn was never known to take any thing that belonged to another. She ate of stolen turkeys, fowls, and eggs, without asking a question. She had been found sleeping in sheets pilfered from the clothes-lines of a neighboring village. She cut up and made over for Clapham many a garment which she knew her husband had stolen; but never

Digitized by Google

was she known to take a penny's worth herself. We cannot account for this; we only state the fact. It may explain, in some measure, our friend Clapham's aversion to following his father's trade.

"Father began with me," he said to Harry, "when I was a little shaver not six years old; and before I was ten, I've robbed many a hen's-nest, and many a hen-roost for him. Since then, I have done, in the main, better. I have taken many a beating rather than do as father bid me, and his hand is heavy, and cruel hard, Harry. Once he wrenched my shoulder out of joint, and another time he broke two of my finger-bones.

"Last spring I did chores for Mr. Smith, and he paid me in notions, — a little molasses, and rum for father, and now and then a codfish, and so on. He got a great deal out of me, and gave me but little for it; but there's few that would employ father's boy; so I had to take what I could get. He trusted me, and I felt beholden to him for that, and never so much as took a nut of any kind, or raisin, though I passed the box twenty times a day. I hated

Digitized by Google

thieving and lying, I can't tell why, brought up as I have been; but as true as truth is truth, I did; and yet — O dear! — the day came that I found I was just father's own son, and nothing else.

"There was a traveller, one evening, stopped at the shop to buy an umbrella. Mr. Smith was called off. The man took the umbrella, laid down the price, — two half dollars, — and left the shop. There lay the money. Mr. Smith had not seen it. The traveller had, as I believed, passed on out of town. There was to be a training, the next day, in Sheffield, and a menagerie was coming there, and for two days I had heard folks talking over the advertisement of it that was up in Mr. Smith's shop, with pictures of all the animals around it. You have seen such, Harry. Of all things in the world, I wanted most to see the animals. Every body was going but I. There the money lay. If I took it, I could go. Father would let me, I knew, if I gave him the half of it. Still I held back. I heard Smith coming, and I thought he had never paid me half he must have paid another boy for the work I did, and I — took it.

Digitized by Google

Yes, Harry, I stole it! Father was not by. It was not fear of him. Nobody told me to take it. This time I was a thief. Now you know all."

"Not all. Did Mr. Smith find it out?"

"Yes; he soon found it out. The traveller had not gone a quarter of a mile when it began to rain, and he found something the matter with the spring of the umbrella; so he came back to change it. He then told Mr. Smith he had put the money on the counter. Mr. Smith charged me with stealing it, and he thrust his hand into my pocket, and found it. Then he called me every thing, and twitted me with my father and mother, and I got mad, and told him, if he'd been honest by me, and paid me what I earned, I should have been honest by him. Then he turned me out, and told me never to darken his doors again. Now, Harry, you know all." Clapham was silent for a moment. Harry said nothing. "I knew it would be so," resumed Clapham, his voice trembling so that he could scarcely articulate: "you know me, now, for a thief, — a thief on my own hook, — and you can't be friends with me, any way." Harry hes-

Digitized by Google

itated one moment, and but one. "Yes, one way, I can," he said; "the Scripture way, — 'Go, and sin no more.' Mother often says to us, 'God forgives the penitent, and how dare we not to forgive our fellow-creatures?' I believe you, Clapham; I believe you have told me the truth, and the whole truth, and I'll stand by you so long as you'll stand straight."

Clapham turned his eyes, streaming with tears, on Harry, and his face beamed with an expression of gratitude and joy which Harry never forgot. "Thank ye, thank ye, Harry!" he said, in a subdued voice. "This is more than your saving me from drowning I thought I could pay you for that; I never can for this."

The boys separated. "If I am ever good for any thing," thought Clapham, as he pursued his way alone, "I shall have Harry Davis to thank for it. I might have been punished, and talked to, and preached to forever, but it would not have done it. Harry *believes* me; he's friends with me, and that keeps me from despising myself; and when I am with Harry's folks, I feel as if I might be something if I could get out

Digitized by Google

of *his* clutches." No wonder that Clapham, in his thoughts, shrunk from giving the name of father to that evil being who was like a cruel fate to him.

Many happy visions rose before him as he, that evening, pursued his solitary way. The Davises were the central light of all his castles in the air. His path lay along the margin of Rhigi's brook; it glittered and sparkled in the moonlight. The leaves scarcely stirred as the soft, night breezes stole over them. Clapham stopped for a moment, conscious of a new feeling, and gazed around him with sensations he had never before experienced. Is there not something in the soul that answers, like an echo, to the music of nature?

> "'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh;
> 'Tis wilder than th' unmeasured notes
> Of that strange lyre, whose strings
> The genii of the breezes sweep."

This poor mountain-boy felt this something within him vibrating to the voice of nature. He looked up to the vast, bright firmament, and a feeling of awe, an indefinite sense of God's presence, without fear or dread, stole over him. Perhaps it was that Harry's

Digitized by Google

kindness to him had inspired a sense of God's infinite goodness and love, of which it was the true, though faint image; however that might be, there was a new feeling. He turned from the brook into the wood, where the trees were so thick that scarcely a ray of light penetrated to the path he followed. Suddenly he emerged into an open space, where the broad, yellow moon sent in her light, intercepted only by the shadow of the tall trees, that, like a wall, enclosed it It was a startling contrast to the darkness from which he had come. Impulsively, and for the first time in his life, he fell upon his knees. Every feeling in his bosom was a true prayer. Few, untaught, and simple, were the words he uttered. There was a struggling cry for pardon for the past, and strength for the future, and a burst of gratitude for his friend.

It was sincere desire — true prayer. Of such it is that God says, "I will hear ye when ye cry unto me."

A half hour after, Clapham entered his father's hut with an indescribable loathing. It was filled with smoke, made visible by a blaze, over which Massy was

Digitized by Google

frying a mess of fish, pork, and onions, the fumes of which, mingling with the smoke of Norman's pipe, settled about the beams and rafters. A cross-pole was garnished with broken kettles, baskets, gourds, dried herbs, strings of apples, and strips of drying pumpkin. A blackened and greasy table, with a molasses jug, and broken brown ware, was set out for supper.

"Sure it was all a grievous, odious scene,
Where all was dismal, melancholy, mean;
———— unwholesome and unclean."

Norman was half reclining in one corner, on a filthy pile, called a bed. He growled at Clapham, as he entered, for his long delay; and, seizing the jug, he took a heavy draught from it.

Massy received her portion rather more parentally, and thanked Clapham as she untied her parcel of snuff. The knot was difficult, and Massy's fingers none of the steadiest. Norman called out to her, with a curse, that her fat was on fire, and she'd burn them all up alive. In turning hastily to extinguish the flame, she spilt her snuff into the mess. Norman, enraged at the prospect of losing his supper, sprang off his lair, and began beating her. Massy screamed.

Digitized by Google

A tired hound, that had been sleeping at full length before the fire, joined, growling, in the fray.

It was such scenes as these, that had made poor Clapham say to Harry Davis, "You have a home; we live in a hell!" No, not quite a hell, while there was there one spirit capable of love and hope.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

A VOICE FROM THE SPIRIT LAND.

"For Death his sacred seal has set
On bright and by-gone hours;
And they we mourn are with us yet,
Are more than ever ours."

HARRY DAVIS took his homeward way with a light heart, and entered his mother's door with a joyous spring. The tea-table was neatly prepared for that pleasantest of New England rustic meals, "the tea."

There were few industrious and sober people in the county poorer than the Davises. But poverty, in its received sense, is not a word applicable to any such American family. What would a starving housewife in an Irish shanty, or one of the poor peasant women of the continent of Europe, say to Mrs. Davis's tea-table, with its white cloth, its whole and fitting

Digitized by Google

earthen ware, its bright knives, its tea sugar, and *cream*, its white bread, blackberry pie, and fried fish?

"This looks comfortable," said Davis, obeying the pleasant announcement, "Tea is ready!" and turning his chair around from his desk and his inventions. "I have done a good job at head-work to-day," he added, "and have had nothing to eat but a slice of bread and some knick-knacks the neighbors sent in for Lucy. Mother is so notional, she won't let the poor child touch them."

"Ah! but, father," interposed Annie, "the doctor said, if there were more people would do as mother does, and give to the well the custards, and cake, and sweetmeats, the neighbors send in for the sick, they would save a great many patients from his hands."

"Tut! nonsense, Annie — as if sickness did not come of itself, or when the Lord chooses to send it. How came Lucy sick? I should like to know that. Your mother keeps her on bread and milk, and potatoes and meat not above once a day. How came she brought up with a fever?"

Digitized by Google

"The doctor says, sir, it was brought on by the unripe plums you gave her at Deacon Carr's. When fevers are about, doctor says they will set in upon any bad derangement of the stomach."

"O, that's nothing but a new-fangled notion. Children eat every thing. I have eaten just what I fancied, and all the tasty things I could get all my life, and I never had a fever." Davis's lank, sallow cheeks were not the best evidence of his wise mode of living; and, — poor man! — as little Lucy became worse from day to day, he silently resolved never again to give his children unripe fruit. Alas! the wisdom only learned by failure comes too late. We have seldom the same experience twice.

Mrs. Davis did not reproach her husband. She was not of those who find relief in imputing blame. She hoped, from day to day, that little Lucy would be better. She took the whole care of the child, with the aid of Harry and Annie. She would not follow the common rural custom of letting in upon the patient all the kind neighbors who call to express sympathy and offer aid. She had often observed sick children either

Digitized by Google

shrinking from the touch of strangers, or too much excited by them. Contrary to all usage in our country parts, she declined *watchers;* and, when urged by her kind friends to accept their services, she said, "No; I could not sleep soundly while my child is so ill, if she had the best watcher in Salisbury. I sleep beside her, and wake at her least movement. It is a small tax upon me, but it is a hard strain upon another. I have always been against having watchers when you can help it, and I wish to be consistent."

"Consistent" good Mrs. Davis was in making all the detail of her life a manifestation of her theory of her duty. Davis never watched. "He was a remarkable heavy sleeper," he said; "watching never agreed with him!"

There was one visitor only excepted from the general prohibition — the poor, outcast Clapham. He was expected daily, watched for by Lucy, and welcomed with her sweetest smile and out-stretched hand. The doctor prescribed feverbush tea, and Clapham, of course, brought the feverbush from the mountain. The next day, winter-greens were recommended, and each day some rural febrifuge, which Clapham's wood-

Digitized by Google

craft enabled him to supply. With the herbs, Clapham brought strings of bright berries, which Annie strung, and Lucy amused herself, at her best intervals, with wreathing around her white arms. The flowers were few and faded on the hill side and by the brook, but the lovely fringed gentian was still in perfection, and Clapham had always a handful of these, which he called "Lucy's flowers."

"I do wish, Clapham," said Lucy, "that you and Harry would carry me along the brook, and lay me down on the soft grass, where the cool wind blows, and where I could drink all the time. Here it's so hot! Feel, how my hand burns! You will carry me there when I am a little better, won't you, boys?" Both boys eagerly promised; but alas! the cruel disease was making rapid progress.

The next day, when, as usual, Clapham came in late in the afternoon, the family, with the exception of Davis, who had gone of an errand to the village, were in the little bed-room. A change had taken place. Lucy was dying. Her distress was over. Nature had given up the struggle, and her young life was ebbing

Digitized by Google

away. Mrs. Davis heard Clapham lift the latch of the outer door, and beckoned to him to come softly in. He did so, and knelt at the foot of the trundle-bed. Lucy was supported by pillows. The hue of life was paled on her cheek. Her mother's, lying beside it, was of the deepest crimson. Her mother was on her knees, and so were Harry and Lucy, each holding one of those little hands that seemed to grasp every fibre of their hearts. "My children, pray with me," said the mother; and in a low, but perfectly distinct voice, she said, "Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. *Thy will be done* ——" She stopped. There needed no more. These all-comprehending words expressed the unbounded prayer of her heart; her faith that God was her Father, the Father of her children; her desire to utter his name with awe and love; her complete resignation of her own hopes and purposes for her child; and the present indulgence of her affections. As she concluded, Harry said to her, in a low, trembling voice, "Mother, it never before seemed to me hard to pray that prayer!"

Digitized by Google

"Is it hard, now, my son?"

"Hard? Yes, mother."

"It should not be, my children. We give up little Lucy to wiser, greater love than ours. The kingdom of heaven is coming to her. No more pain for her ——"

Lucy at this moment opened her eyes, and consciousness, without pain, revived. There was even a slight movement of her lips to kiss her mother, and, as her mother pressed hers to her, she faintly, but perceptibly smiled, and with her finger made a beckoning motion to Clapham to come nearer. He rose and knelt by Annie. Lucy spread out her little hand so as to embrace both theirs. At this moment, the setting sun shone out from a cloud, and its rays fell, like a halo, around little Lucy's fair hair.

"Pretty moon!" she said. The mists of death were gathering over her sight, and the sun was no longer bright to her eye.

They all felt as if they were near the visible presence of God. The curtain that hides the other world was slowly rising, and they felt the beautiful

Digitized by Google

reality of the goodness and love to which the precious child was going. It was not death. It was life — immortal life. A solemn but not painful feeling pervaded them. No one stirred or moved, till Lucy looked from one to the other, and then rested her eye on Harry, and he seemed unconsciously to answer to the glance in saying, "How I love you, darling!" She replied, slowly, feebly, but with perfect distinctness, so that each heard her, "We — all — love — one another!" These were the last words she spoke — words that bound them in a sacred band, to be cruelly assailed, but never broken.

From this time, her breathing became fainter and fainter. There was no struggle, and when the twilight had faded away, and the stars began to appear, she sank to her rest as quietly as if it had been to her night's sleep.

The spell of solemn silence was first broken bv the sweet voice of the mother.

"She is gone! my children," she said — "gone to Him who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the

Digitized by Google

kingdom of heaven — gone from our sight, but not from us."

"Not from us, mother?" asked Annie, in a perplexed tone of voice.

"No, my children, I hope not. I believe not. Little Lucy is an angel now, and I think she will love to be near us; and nothing but our evil-doing can separate us."

This was a new thought to the children. It seemed to them to take away the sting of separation, and, at the same time, to give them an acute sense of responsibility, an intense desire to be pure, so that that purified and loved spirit might dwell with them. Mrs. Davis's calmness, her faith, and her gentle submission, had converted this chamber of death into the vestibule of heaven. Death did not appear to these children the king of terrors, but a messenger of love who had come to take their dear little companion to happiness and immortality, and to inspire them with a faith and hope that taught them how to value and how to use life.

To Clapham it seemed a vision; a revelation; and after all the necessary offices had been performed,

Digitized by Google

after the kind neighbors had come and gone, after the good village minister had made his prayer with the family, and after he had seen the form of little Lucy laid out in its white robes, her head encircled with a wreath of the fringed gentians he had brought that afternoon for her, and on her bosom sweet, half-open rose-buds old Mrs. Allen had sent in from her monthly rose, — after this, he took his way homeward. Slowly, thoughtfully he went. Suddenly a loathing revulsion from his own most loathsome dwelling came over him; he turned back, retraced his way, and lay down on the ground on the outside of that little bed-room window. There he waked and slept alternately, and had visions of his little friend now by the brook on Rhigi, and now an angel amidst beauty and glory that never before had dawned on his mind. Thoughts of his real condition, of his dreadful home, came like demons among these angel visitations. The poor boy was struggling in the mysteries of life. Still there was something that whispered hope and peace — something that breathed into his soul the feeling expressed in the following beautiful stanza. —

Digitized by Google

"Brother, the angels say,
Peace to thy heart!
We, too, O brother,
Have been as thou art—
Hope-lifted, doubt-depressed,
Seeing in part,
Tried, troubled, tempted,
Sustained, as thou art."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

A GATHERING STORM.

"'Twas past the dead of night, when every sound
That nature mingles might be heard around;
But none from man."

CLAPHAM did not return to his mountain-home till late in the afternoon of the next day. His mind was full of the holy scenes he had witnessed. He had seen death for the first time; and had seen it, most happily for himself, in the home of the Christian, where death was received as God's messenger, sent to take the most loved being in the household to a happier home, to a higher school, to the instruction and guidance of Him whose love and wisdom are infinite. He had seen little Lucy, the sweet nestler in every heart, given up with calm submission. The world seemed changed to Clapham; but O, with what weight it fell back upon him as his own

Digitized by Google

home came in view! His father was sitting on the door-step smoking his pipe. He saw, through the open door, that his mother was dozing on the bed.

"Ain't you a pretty chap?" said Norman, surlily. "Where have you been browsing all night, and to this time of day?"

"At Mr. Davis's," replied Clapham, quietly.

"That's one lie; now tell another. What have you been about there?"

"I have been seeing little Lucy die."

"Do tell?" said Norman, and a human feeling stirred in his bosom. He knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and put in fresh tobacco, saying, meanwhile, "She was the likeliest-looking young one ever born in Salisbury. Sich as she always die."

The last words struck on Massy's ear, and waked her from her dose.

"Who is dead now?" she asked, not more than half awake.

"Not you, mam; but you might as well be," replied her brutal lord, "as lying there, when I told you I was waiting for a patch on my coat. Up

Digitized by Google

with you, or I'll bang you. It's Davis's girl that's dead, and our Clap is chief mourner."

"You have not got no feelings, Norman," said the gentler helpmeet; "you're 'tween man and brute — worse than neither. When is the funeral, Clapham?"

"There is to be no funeral here," replied Clapham. "Mrs. Davis wished to lay little Lucy with her people, and she has taken her down to the Canaan burying-ground."

"Who went in the procession?" asked Massy, who, in common with persons of her caste, was curious about the minutiæ of funerals.

"They had no procession. Mr. Davis wanted to have the people collect and go with them, but Mrs. Davis was very much set on having it quiet; and so Sheriff Parley offered them his wagon and horses, and they went, at two o'clock, down to her uncle's, which is near to the burying-ground."

"Did they take the corpse, and Harry, and Annie, all in one wagon?"

"No; only little Lucy. Annie had one of her sick-headaches, and Harry staid at home with her."

Digitized by Google

Norman seemed very attentive, though as yet he had asked no question. He now, with affected carelessness, demanded how long they were to be gone.

"Till to-morrow morning," Clapham replied.

"Good!" muttered Norman; and then, his manner suddenly changing, he eagerly asked, "Are you sure of that, Clap?"

"Yes, I am. I went with Harry to get the team, and his mother bade us tell Sheriff Parley she should return to-morrow morning; and she never broke her word in her life."

"I hope this won't be a first time," said Norman. "What time will they be home?"

"I don't know," replied Clapham, rather impatient at idle questions, (as he deemed them,) which grated on his feelings; and he turned to go away, not caring whither, when his father seized him by the arm, and jerked him back. "Stand still, can't you?" said he; "you are as slippery as an eel." He hemmed two or three times, then cleared his throat, and added, "She died in the bed-room, did not she?"

Digitized by Google

"Yes; little Lucy and Annie always slept there in the trundle-bed."

"I should not think them young folks would like sleeping in the room where the corpse was," said Norman, looking, not at Clapham, but up at the trees. He paused for a moment, but eliciting no reply from Clapham, he added, "I say, Clap, what are you so dumb for? Where are they going to sleep?"

Clapham was incapable of being irritated, and he replied, quietly, "I don't think they have any fear to sleep where little Lucy lay, with flowers all around her, looking like an angel."

"Well, then, the gal is going to sleep in the bed-room, is she?"

Had not Clapham's mind been completely preoccupied, he might have suspected some sinister motive in all this questioning; but he did not, and he replied with the particularity his father wished. "The bed-room window was open in the morning, while it rained, and the room got damp, and Harry's mother told him to move the trundle-bed into the kitchen, and to bring down his bed and sleep by Annie."

Digitized by Google

"Will he do it?"

"I rather guess so," replied Clapham, with a smile; "the time has not come yet that Harry has disappointed his mother."

"I wish all young youth were like him," murmured Massy.

"And all old mams, like you," said Norman; "that would be a nice fit! But, I say, Clap, you are sure they sleep in the kitchen?"

"I am sure I helped Harry fix the beds there, before I came away."

"You're a wise lad, Clap, and no mistake," said Norman, with a chuckling laugh in his throat, which his son well knew was an expression of evil omen; and he involuntarily fixed his eyes inquiringly on the bad man. "None of your impudence, you rascal!" he exclaimed, shaking his fist at Clapham.

"Impudence! I did not speak."

"Your eyes did, though."

"And what did they say?" asked Clapham, with a dim smile.

"You're a fool, boy," said his father; and then,

Digitized by Google

suddenly checking his irascible and irritated temper, he added, quietly, "I am the wrong side of the fence this time. I am not mad with you, Clap. Mam has worn me out, waiting here all day for my coat. Come, old woman, ain't that hole sewed up yet?"

Massy tossed the coat to him, saying, "You are the *on*reasonablest man that ever a poor woman-critter was slave to; my whole life goes waiting on you."

"That is what you are made for, my dear. You, and all the rest of the women-folks, are made to serve their masters; hey, Clap?"

Clapham thought of his dear friend Harry's mother, and he thought some women-folks were quite equal to their masters. Norman put on his coat, re-filled his pipe, and walked off. After going a few paces, he turned suddenly around, and said, in a voice of unwonted kindness, "I say, Clap, I started a sight of partridges up there by the pond, and if you want to look after them, you may take my gun and some powder and shot; you'll find it there under my pillow. But mind and come home this evening. I shall be home to supper, and do you be here; and,

Digitized by Google

remember, Clap, you must do me a good turn when I want it. Promise me. You're a boy of your word, I'll say that for you. I never catched you in a lie yet. Come, promise."

"Why, father, I would do a'most any thing in the world for you, if you would speak as you do now."

"That's you, Clap. You promise?"

"Yes."

"It's a bargain, then; and mind you're home to supper."

"What has got into father?" said Clapham, as Norman, entering the wood-path, disappeared.

"It's no good," said Massy. "Sunshine or thunder-claps, it's all the same. He's been clean possessed, ever since yesterday morning, about a rifle on sale down to the Furnace. He says he never saw the like on't. He was talking about it in his sleep last night, though his tongue was so thick I could not understand more than one word in ten. He'd clean drained the jug. He would not give me even one spoonful, to take the bad taste out of my mouth.

Digitized by Google

No, I believe — I do believe, Clap, and if it were my last, dying word I would say so, — I do believe he'd sell his soul for rum and a rifle. And now, Clappy," she continued, in a whining tone, "if you'll only take this fourpence, and get me a little something down below."

Clapham looked earnestly in his mother's face, and shook his head. "I cannot, mother — I cannot," he said; "my hands have been on that good child, — God's child now, — and I cannot touch that hateful jug, or any thing that holds that dreadful stuff. I have had such thoughts these last two days! I have been with good folks, and I want to be fit to live among them. Don't ask me, mother." There was a quietness in Clapham's tone, a dignity and deep resolve in his manner, that gave to the boy the power of manhood. Massy was, for the moment, awed; and, without renewing her request, she permitted him to take the gun, &c., and go up the mountain-path. Her eye followed him till he was out of sight. She then sat down, whimpering, on the door-step "Well," she said, talking to herself, "if this don't

Digitized by Google

beat me! Norman is too bad to live with, and Clappy is too good. It does give feelings, though, to hear my child talk that way — Norman Dunn's boy too! Where did he larn it? He has never been justly one of us; but now he's clean changed. I felt as underval'ed as if a judge was talking to me. Well, well, it did go to the spot. He wants to do right; he wants to be fit to live with good folks; he must not stay with us then!" The poor woman began to cry heartily. She was a mother; and ignorant, abject, drunken, drabbish, as she was, sunken to the very lowest depths of sordid wretchedness, there was yet that in her heart which answered to her boy's heaven-born desire for something better than his evil home. God's image is never wholly effaced from the soul. No man or woman is irreclaimable.

Twilight was breathing its sweet peace over the earth; the last lingering birds were singing their good-night notes; and every woodland thing was giving out its odor, when Clapham, with a string of game over his shoulder, came down the Rhigi road. This game was converted into a savory stew, and

Digitized by Google

awaiting Norman, when, late in the evening, he came home from the Furnace. He was silent and sulky, and had evidently been drinking. There was, in those days, always more or less drinking going on among the loungers about the Furnace Tavern. The supper was such as sportsmen most relish, but no word of praise did he bestow on it; and, when Clapham fished up from the mess the quarters of a large grey squirrel, and told him of the very spot he found him, and how he treed him, Norman gave no sign that he heard him. "You don't seem sharp set," said his wife; "I guess you've been feeding at the Furnace."

"Feeding on air, then, for I have not eaten a mouthful since breakfast."

"Then dad has had a plenty of something else, I guess," said Massy to Clapham, with a wink — "what takes the wire-edge off from hunger."

"Guess again, mam. I have not drank the value of half a pint to-day."

"Well, then, I guess you had bad luck about the rifle."

Digitized by Google

"That's another of your eternal guesses. I've bargained for it, and am to have possession when I've paid ten dollars."

"You pay ten dollars! That will be when the sky falls, and we catch larks. Hey, Clappy?"

Clapham made no reply. He had a more than usual dread of a storm, and, having satisfied his hunger, he lay down on his forlorn little bed, and was soon in a sleep that many a king would have envied. Does the hearty boy, or the temperate laboring man, who lies down to sweet sleep, know what a blessing is "this chief nourisher at life's feast"? Surely labor is no evil, plain fare is none, if they bring with them a good which no money and no greatness can buy.

Norman did not sleep. He did not close his eyes. Poverty must have the attending angel, a good conscience; it cannot alone bring sleep. Clapham was dreaming now of little Lucy. He saw again the plaited ruffle of her night dress, around her white bosom, the rose-buds lying on it, and a smile on those pretty lips. Then he was with Harry, on

Digitized by Google

Rhigi, dashing through the brook, or watching the game. Suddenly, it seemed to him that Harry grasped his arm. He awoke. It was not Harry, but his father, who said, "Hush, Clap; it's me. What are you so scared for? Get up. Don't wake mam; let her snore her soul out."

"Why! what is the matter, father?"

"Nothing. Do as I bid you. Dress you, put your cap on, and come out with me."

"It is not yet day."

"No, nor won't be this three hours; mind me, and be still about it."

Clapham augured no good from this movement of his father. He knew too well the object of his night-prowlings, and he had resolved never again to be the companion of them. "I am sleepy, father," he said; "I was awake all last night, and I don't want to get up."

"Remember our bargain," replied his father. "Remember your promise. You're bound. Come, come along."

Clapham rose, dressed, and followed Norman.

Digitized by Google

After going a little way towards the village, he made a dead stop, and said, "Now, father, I'll tell you what it is. I have been thinking a good deal lately, and I have determined to make an end of this night-work. I'm tired on it. I hate it." His father seized him by the collar; but Clapham, undaunted, added, "I won't do it."

Norman stood for a moment, glaring fiercely at the boy, his hand still grasping his collar. Clapham did not flinch; he stood as firmly braced as if he were a match for the tall, strong man; and the spirit of the boy, even in that slight and powerless frame, awed, for a moment, the bad man.

The moon was in her second quarter. There was a strong south wind, and clouds scudding over the sky. At this moment they rolled off the moon, and it shone brightly in Clapham's face. It was deadly pale, but calm and determined.

Norman hesitated; his eye fell. A spirit good and strong, a spirit of truth, was looking out of the boy's clear eye.

Norman's tone changed. "Now, Clap," he said,

Digitized by Google

what for are you making this fuss? I have only told you to come along with me. One person may lead a horse to the water, you know, but it takes two to make him drink. Keep quiet, can't you? till I ask you to do something more than walk down to the Furnace with me. I'm after that rifle, and if I ain't down there by daylight, I lose it. There's one of them New York sparks that's up here a gunning. He's out afore the sun is up. Bill Haskins says he told him about the rifle, and he said he'd go down and see it this morning early, and I mean to be ahead on him."

"O, if that's all, father!" said Clapham, cheerfully. "You've come to your milk, have you? Make tracks a little faster, then, will you?" On they went. The path they were in passed Davis s house at the distance of a few rods. When at the point nearest to it, another path diverged from it, and led directly to Davis's door-step. Into this path Norman turned, and walked on rapidly ahead of Clapham They were within a few yards of the house when Clapham's heart sank. He caught his father by the sleeve, and, said "Father, what are you coming here for?"

Digitized by Google

"Hush!" said Norman, in a low tone, that went like a sharp whistle through the boy's head. And he half carried, half dragged Clapham along, till they stood at the only window of that consecrated bedroom, at the very spot where Clapham had lain on the ground the preceding night. It was a small sliding window, and not secured by any fastening whatever. "In there, in a bureau drawer,—you know just where," whispered Norman, "is a purse. I must have it, and you must get it. No holding back now." He softly drew the window open. "Come, snake in, and done with it."

"I'll die first," answered Clapham.

"No!" muttered Norman, with a horrid oath. "You do it, or Harry Davis dies." He drew a knife from beneath his coat, and, Clapham still immovable, he added, "I swear I'll kill him with this knife if you don't do as I bid you."

"Father! father!" said Clapham, laying both hands on his father's arm.

"I swear I will," repeated Norman. "I will, if the business is not done as I bid you. If you speak

Digitized by Google

a loud word, or make a breath of noise to wake him, I will break open the door, and do it for him and the gal too. I had as lief as stick a pig, and then burn the house down; and who's the wiser? I have determined on't aforehand. Will you mind me now?"

Clapham knew his father's savage temper, his iron will. He fully believed he would do as he threatened; and the image of Harry and of Annie murdered — murdered by his father's hand — was before him. He listened — he heard no human sound. He looked around on every side; there was no human creature stirring — no help. "Will you do it? Speak," said Norman, pointing his knife to the door.

Clapham, forced to the decision, said, "I will;" and he mounted to the window. The opening was but just large enough to admit his body. As he slid down into the room, his foot touched a footstool that had been left standing there, and, turning over on the bare floor, it made a loud noise. Norman's head was at the open window. "Damnation!" he muttered in a suppressed voice.

"I did not mean it," whispered Clapham, who was

Digitized by Google

now fully persuaded that his friends' safety depended on his executing well his father's purpose. He heard a movement in the next room. The sleepers were awakened. He stood stock still, and heard Annie ask, "What is that noise, Harry?"

"I don't know. Shall I jump up and see?" replied Harry.

"Shall I give him notice, or what shall I do?" thought Clapham, when Annie again spoke, saying, "No, don't get up, Harry. It's no matter. It's only Tom."

"Yes. It must be. The window was open when little Lucy was lying there, and we all forgot to shut it; so puss has jumped in."

"You think it certainly is the cat, Harry?"

"Yes, Annie; but, cat or no cat, there's nothing to hurt us; so go to sleep, Annie."

"I will; but when I am asleep, don't you get up and leave me, Harry." She spoke drowsily; and he answered, "Never fear. I shall be asleep myself."

Cold chills were running over Clapham. Those dear, familiar voices; the danger so near to them:

Digitized by Google

the blessed memory of that morning when he had stood on that very spot, and looked on little Lucy for the last time, — altogether paralyzed him, till his father, in a voice, though not above a whisper, expressing rage and impatience, said, "*Do it.*" Clapham drew open the drawer in which he knew all Mrs. Davis's little store was deposited, took out the purse, threw it to his father, reclosed the drawer, and withdrew through the window. Harry was listening. The partition was so thin that he could scarcely persuade himself that he did not hear a drawer open and shut. He thought of his mother's money, and was impulsively springing up, when Annie, aroused too, caught him by the arm, saying, "Stop a minute." Before the minute passed, all was again quiet, and Norman and Clapham were out of hearing, and, in a little while, Harry and Annie were again asleep. Norman silently strode homeward. Clapham followed, his heart as heavy as lead. When they were within a few paces of their own door, Norman stopped, and turning short round upon Clapham, he said, "I'll tell you the case, Clap. You've got some new notions into you, and it's

Digitized by Google

all nonsense. There's nobody cares for us, and why should we care for any body? I ask no favors, and I'll grant none. As we brew, so we must bake. As we've begun, so we must end. Nobody is friends to us, and we'll be friends to nobody."

"I have friends," said Clapham, "and I'll be true to them; and if I live another day——"

"Hush up, square!" interrupted his father, "and hear me out; as sure as you blab, I'll be the death of you."

"I don't care a straw," answered Clapham; "I wish I were dead, and under ground, now; and, if killing me is the worst you can do, you are welcome. Now, hear me. I swear, — not as you do, but as the folks swear in court, — I swear, and hold up my hand to it, so help me God, come what come may, I'll tell the truth."

"You will, will you?" answered Norman, his voice trembling with rage; "then we'll see which will be master. I'll swear — and hold my hand up to it, too — if you let on, by word or sign, of what we've done to-night, I'll burn down Davis's house in the

Digitized by Google

dead of night, and all the folks in it; I will, so help me——." The name he would have impiously invoked stuck in his throat. "Are you afeard of me now?" he added.

"I am! I am!" replied Clapham; and the poor boy threw himself on the ground, and cried with a sense of utter helplessness and misery. Norman seized him, raised him to his feet, and dragged him onward to their hut. "Be still," he said; "shut up; go to bed, and go to sleep. If you mind me, all is right." Clapham stumbled in, and on to his straw bed; and, burying his face in it, he sobbed till, nature overpowered, he fell asleep.

Norman did not sleep. His mind was busy with plans to evade justice and secure his ill-gotten gains. After revolving various plans, he determined that he would be early at the furnace, buy the rifle, "get over the line," and go roaming. Bad as he was, Clapham had made some impression on him; and he was willing, if he could provide for his own safety, to bear the imputation of the theft and save Clapham. As his passion subsided, there rose a

Digitized by Google

sense of his boy's courage and fidelity. "I never feared nothing," thought Norman; "but, as he stood there with his hand raised, he made my heart beat. All the witnesses on earth, swearing agin me in court, could not do it."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

A TOTAL ECLIPSE.

"The sheriff and the watch are at the door. They are come to search the house. Shall I let them in?"

MRS. DAVIS and her husband returned earlier than they were expected on the following morning. Deputy Sheriff Parley, from whom she had hired her conveyance, had told her that he was obliged to take some debtors to the county jail on that day, and he should be glad to have his wagon as early as she could return. Mrs. Davis was glad to have this plea with her husband, who was habitually a late sleeper. "It was natural to the Davises," he said. She was saddened by her recent loss, and desired to relieve her mind by plunging into her usual occupations. She roused Davis before the day dawned; and, just as the sun arose, she stopped at the sheriff's gate to inform him of her return. He was a bustling, prompt man; and, being

Digitized by Google

ready to proceed to Canaan, whence he was to take his prisoners, he jumped into the wagon, intending to take possession of it at Davis's door. When they arrived there, Mrs. Davis asked the sheriff to wait till she could bring the money from the house to pay him for the "team." The children were still asleep. She sighed heavily as she passed them, thinking that she should never again see little Lucy lying by them, and proceeded into the bed-room. "I am sure I did not leave that window wide open," thought the careful mother, as the damp, morning breeze blew on her. She opened the drawer, and was struck with its confusion. The things were upturned, and the purse not in its place. She uttered an exclamation, and involuntarily called to Harry. He sprang out of bed, wrapped a sheet round him, and saying, "Dear, dear mother, are you here?" he was in a moment at her side. Annie followed. The loss was communicated, and Harry at once recurred to what had happened in the night, and related it. "There had been a thief in the house: who could it be?" Mrs. Davis called in the sheriff,

Digitized by Google

and he, with official coolness, began an investigation. He looked outside the window for tracks. The ground was hard trodden there, and showed none. "The window," he remarked, "would scarcely admit a man;" but, on measuring it, he concluded that one narrow in the shoulders might get in. But who could it be? No depredation of the sort had ever been committed in Salisbury; and, though there was scarcely a house in the place with a fastening on its doors, none had been entered. There had been pilfering of meat, hung in outer sheds and hen-roosts, but they had all been traced to Norman Dunn, and he could not get half his breadth into that window. "To be sure," added the sheriff, "there's his boy, Clapham."

"Clapham!" interrupted Harry, "it is not he!"

"No, no! indeed it is not!" echoed Mrs. Davis and Annie.

"I do not believe it is," said Sheriff Parley; "the boy is a changed boy, regular and quiet."

While he spoke, the sheriff was shuffling his foot backward and forward: in doing so, he hit it against

Digitized by Google

the overset footstool, and removed it. Harry naturally cast his eye down, and just peeping from beneath it, he saw a pocket-handkerchief. He knew it instantly. It was the one Annie had given to Clapham. The blood rushed up to the very roots of his hair. His first impulse was to snatch and conceal it; but, before he could make a movement, or think another thought, the sheriff, who had seen his change of color, and followed the direction of his eye, caught it up, and shook it out, saying, "What is this? Here's a clew, may be. 'C. D.' — Clapham Dunn! The secret is out!"

Mrs. Davis sat down, trembling. Annie turned pale, and Davis said, "Yes; out, fully!"

"O, no, father!" said Harry; "you don't know Clapham. You mistake, sir," addressing the sheriff. "Mother, Clapham was here all those two last days: could he not have dropped it then?"

Mrs. Davis made no reply. A conviction that Clapham was the guilty one, was stealing over her. and her heart sank within her. She recalled his standing by her when she took out the money to

Digitized by Google

send for little Lucy's medicine. She said nothing till the sheriff asked, "What was the situation of the room when you left it, Mrs. Davis? Was it cleared up?"

"Yes."

"Did you put it to rights yourself? Don't be scared. You are not on oath."

"That makes no difference. I must speak the truth, though the poor boy should seem condemned by it. I did put the room in order before I went away."

"Might not the footstool have been turned over, and you not seen it?"

"Yes, mother, I know it might!" exclaimed Harry. Mrs. Davis shook her head. "Do you remember any thing distinctly about the footstool?" pursued the sheriff.

"Yes. It's little Lucy's. She always sat on it; and for fear something might happen to it, I came back after I went out to get into the wagon, and brought it in from the kitchen, and placed it under the window, where the table had stood with the coffin on it."

"There is no need of further investigation, sheriff," interposed Davis. "I don't wish my family to shield

Digitized by Google

that bad boy any more. I always mistrusted him. You know, mother, I never approved of Harry keeping company with him. What's the next step, sheriff?" The sheriff, after a moment's consideration, said that he thought they had best jump into the wagon at once, and proceed to Norman's; and Davis suggested that, as they must call at Squire Baner's on their way, for a search warrant, it would be best to get his boys to go up with them, as Norman was an ugly customer when he was mad. The prudent sheriff assented to the propriety of this reënforcement, and they were proceeding, when Harry said, "You can take but one of the Baners, for I must go. I must hear the truth from Clapham."

"The truth from Clapham!" echoed Davis; "that's a good one! — the truth from the thief."

"I must go, sir," replied Harry, with a calm decision, that rather staggered his father; and he said, winking at the same time slyly at Sheriff Parley, "Well, it's the sheriff's wagon. What say you, Mr. Sheriff?"

"I say that I can't take a supernumerary. I shall

Digitized by Google

take but one of the Baners. We must drive full speed, or the bird will have flown. Don't put your finger in the pie, Harry Davis. It's a bad mess,— depend on't."

Harry begged, he entreated; but the sheriff was resolute, and drove away at full speed. He was much edified on the way by sundry remarks of Davis on the impossibility of women taking care of money after they had earned it, and on the obvious advantage of their at once paying it over to their husbands!

We return to Norman's hut. He had awakened from a short sleep, had watched in the day, and was awaiting its advance impatiently. He feared to excite suspicion if he should appear at the Furnace at an unusually early hour, and he counted the minutes till he could go, secure the rifle, and be off. Then he cared not how much he was suspected or accused; but, above all things, he dreaded confinement in a jail. It was as intolerable to him as to a Pawnee.

Clapham was sleeping profoundly. It will be remembered that the night preceding the theft he had lain outside little Lucy's window. It had been one long

Digitized by Google

vigil, filled with new thoughts, pure affections, and right purposes. How different had been the last night! Sad, but not to the poor boy guilty. He had resolved that as soon as morning came, and his father had gone, he would go to the Davises, and make a full disclosure, come what come would; and, feeling relieved by this determination, he sank into a deep sleep.

The sheriff was obliged to leave the wagon a quarter of a mile from Norman Dunn's, and ascend the mountain with his companions by a foot-path. Norman heard their footsteps, and was instantly aware of the threatened danger. He had but one moment to consider, and he obeyed the first suggestion of his evil mind. He took the purse from under his pillow, and thrust it through a hole of Clapham's ticking, amidst the straw, and returned to his bed, where he affected to be awakened from sound sleep. Clapham was awakened too. He recognized the sheriff. He started at the sight of Davis. He well knew the quest they must be on, and he drew the ragged coverlet over his head, and lay still.

Norman, having demanded, with the air of lord of

Digitized by Google

the castle, their errand, and told them, with an uncon cerned tone, to "proceed," kept up an under-current of muttering. He thought people that did not meddle nor make in the village might be left in quiet on the mountain. Davis's money! Davis's was the last house in the county he should go to to look for money. Where did Tom Davis get it? Selling Self-churning Churns! or Independent Washing Machines! He had not been to Tom Davis's this ten years.

"But your boy has," said Davis, "and we'll trouble him to get up;" hoping to quiet the slurs which he felt diverted his companions.

"Come, my lad," he said, shaking Clapham; "up with you. You are smart enough when you are crawling into people's windows, at the dead of night. Clapham uncovered his pale face, rose, and put on his clothes. He looked miserable, but any thing but guilty; and every one instinctively felt what a contrast he was to the loathsome scene about him, and above all to his father, whose eyes were blood-shot, his face bloated, and black with a beard of a month's growth, and his nose, like Bardolph's, "an everlasting bonfire light."

Digitized by Google

"We must make a thorough search here," said the sheriff, "for here, as the children say, we are getting hot." He shook out the bed-clothes, and, saying it would not hurt the musty straw to give it an airing, he took the bed to the door, tore it open, and shook it out. The purse rung, as it fell heavily on the door-step. "Pretty well done, for a beginner!" he said, picking up the purse, and then holding it up. "There's one witness against you, my lad;" and then, drawing out from his pocket Clapham's handkerchief, "And here's another!" he added. "Truly, you are a chip of the old block; though he don't look like it, does he?" he added, in a lowered voice, appealing to the standers-by. There was compassion in his voice, —a compassion it was impossible not to feel. Clapham's cheeks and lips were bloodless, but his eye looked steadily up. "Give me that handkerchief," he said, faintly. It was given to him. It had been steeped with tears of sympathy and love — tears for little Lucy. Bitter tears now drenched it as he covered his face, staggered against the wall, and said, in a voice but just audible, "Ruined, ruined!"

Digitized by Google

Massy now crawled out of her lair, and began crying aloud. "Why, Clapham! Clapham!" she said, "I never would have thought it of you. Why, sheriff, though he does belong to us, there never was an honester boy. Clappy never stole in his life, but when *he* made him. 'Twas only two days ago he refused to spend a shilling for me, just 'cause I took it out of *his* pocket." This declaration made no impression at the time, but it was afterwards remembered in Clapham's favor. "Don't," she continued, "don't, Mr. Sheriff, snap him up. You've got the money; what more do you want? He's young to shut up in a jail. Them that's put there always comes out worse than they go in. Norman always did."

"Keep your breath to cool your porridge, old woman," said Norman. "Did you ever see a cat let a mouse go? When you see that, you'll see a sheriff open his clutch. Come, clear out; I don't want any more powwowing here."

The sheriff ordered Massy to tie up all the boy's clothes, as it was not likely he would return very soon. Clapham inquired whither he was to be conveyed.

Digitized by Google

The sheriff condescended to inform him that he was going to transport some debtors from Canaan to the prison at L——, and he should take him there for commitment. "Can't I see Harry Davis before I go?" asked Clapham, beseechingly.

"I will take upon me to answer that question," answered Davis, with an air of great authority. "You *cannot*. You have had a little too much of seeing Harry Davis."

"Does Harry believe I stole the purse?"

"To be sure he does."

"How can he? He does not know the purse is found."

"But he heard you in the night; he found the window open; he saw the handkerchief; and *he knows you*."

Clapham said not another word. It was to him as if there were no more light in the world.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

A CHANGE OF SCENE.

"Man proposes. God disposes."

THE events we have related occurred in the month of September. They had given considerable notoriety to the Davises, and brought them into the eye of the little public of Salisbury. Mrs. Davis was too well known, and too much respected there, to be condemned for having permitted an intercourse between her children and Clapham Dunn. The common remarks were, that "her goodness was imposed on;" that "she never would believe evil of any body;" that "it was well for her that her son Harry was such an uncommon boy;" that "he was one of the few in the world who could touch pitch and not be defiled." Poor Clapham! No thought of pity or charity wandered towards him, except (an honorable exception for him) from the

Digitized by Google

bosoms of that little family who best knew him. Many a prayer arose from Mrs. Davis's secret chamber that "the lost might be found;" and Harry and Annie had many a talk together of a hundred instances of Clapham's honesty, and a thousand of his good-heartedness, and they generally concluded with expressing a hope that there was some unfathomable secret that would some day explain away the proofs, they could not openly controvert, of Clapham's guilt, and a conviction that he was not, at any rate, so guilty as he seemed. If only Mr. Lyman had been in town, he might have done something; he was always a good friend to Clapham; he would at least have given him an opportunity to speak to a friend. That this was due to him, Harry so vehemently insisted, that he persuaded his father, who was going through L——, on his way to Washington, to take a letter from him to Clapham. In this letter he expressed, most affectionately, his grief for what had happened; his mother's, and Annie's. He said they were not willing to believe any thing against him, and that what other people called proofs, they only called mysterious, unexplained circumstances. "I have believed in you,

Digitized by Google

Clapham," he said. "I yet hope. Write the truth to me. You cannot write yourself. If there is no one in the jail who will write for you, send for the minister of L——. I dare say he is a good man, — ministers almost always are, — and he will write for you."

Had poor Clapham received this letter, what a healing balm it would have been to his wounded spirit! What a motive it would have given for effort and perseverance! But he was destined never to see it. Davis, whose improvidence and carelessness were the bane of all dependence on him, put Harry's letter where he usually carried his business papers, — in the crown of his hat, — and lost it. Day after day, Harry hoped and sighed for an answer, but no answer came; and, when Davis returned from Washington, not liking to confess he had lost the letter, he asked Harry, carelessly, if he had received an answer from Clapham; and, on Harry replying, "No," he merely said, "I thought not!" His morality was as slipshod as his other qualities.

The country "season" was now closing, and Mrs. Dawson and the New York party who had delayed their return to the city to enjoy October in the country

Digitized by Google

were packing for their departure. Mrs. Dawson had taken a great liking to Harry Davis. She had been struck with his intelligence, his good manners, and his manliness. She found he had profited by a very good common school education; that he had taken advantage of the opportunities of reading, afforded by the diffusion of cheap publications; that he had wisely taken advice of his cultivated friend, Mr. Lyman, and, rejecting trash, read only books that are books.

One of the greatest men of letters England has produced — Gibbon — declares that his love of reading was more to him than all the rest of his education. Harry Davis did not expect to be a man of letters. He was not an ambitious boy; but he was early taught that, in whatever condition he might find himself, a well-stored mind would be imperishable riches, contributing to his respectability and happiness.

Mrs. Dawson kindly called on Mrs. Davis soon after little Lucy's burial; and, introducing what she rightly thought a most consolatory topic, she said, "Your son Harry is a remarkable boy, Mrs. Davis."

"He is a good child, ma'am."

Digitized by Google

"That he is. I have been much struck with seeing him so cheerfully fetch and carry our clothes to your wash. Some boys would have let their mothers do it; but your son seems to know that the true honor lies in performing the service for his mother."

"He has always taken pleasure in serving me," said Mrs. Davis, with a smile of sweet satisfaction.

"Well, he will be rewarded, Mrs. Davis. He may be president of the United States, yet."

"I hope not."

"Hope not?"

"I mean, Mrs. Dawson, that I don't wish my son to be ambitious; that I think it is the fault and folly of our people to be all striving for something beyond them. There is so much said now-a-days about people 'going ahead,' that they are all pushing forward — looking beyond — grasping at something they cannot quite reach, instead of being contented with what they have — building castles in the air, instead of raising a comfortable dwelling on solid ground. No, Mrs. Dawson, I am sincere when I say that my highest ambition is to see my son an intelligent farmer or mechanic, a

Digitized by Google

good member of society, but not a doctor or lawyer, and, above all things, not by trade a politician."

"I admire your moderation, Mrs. Davis, but I confess I look for something a little better for Harry."

Mrs. Dawson had conceived certain plans for Harry. She was a woman of unbounded sympathy, and the most diffusive kindness; but, we must confess, with rather more zeal than judgment.

"Your ideas are excellent, Mrs. Davis," she resumed; "but Harry is such an uncommon boy that we may expect something a little out of the common way for him. Why, Mr. Lyman says he draws very nearly as well as he does. Who knows but he might make a great painter?"

"O Mrs. Dawson, that's not to be thought of. He draws well because he has taken a deal of pains. Even Mr. Lyman, though he is so fond of him, says he has no genius."

"How would you like to have him a merchant?"

"A merchant! He would have small capital to begin on."

"That is nothing. Most of our rich men have

Digitized by Google

begun with no other capital than enterprise, industry, and good character. Have you any plan for Harry?"

Mrs. Davis had. She was at that moment awaiting an answer from a respectable carpenter, a friend of hers settled in L——. The answer came, and was unfavorable. The carpenter had no vacant place. Mrs. Dawson renewed the proposition for a mercantile career. She proposed that Harry should enter a retail shop in New York. At first, Mrs. Davis shrank from the temptations of city life, and uncertainties of trade. But Mrs. Dawson urged so earnestly, entered into all Harry's future with such friendly and flattering zeal, that both mother and son were persuaded to think of the project. Two or three other failures to obtain places for which Mrs. Davis had applied, occurred at this time; and finally it was agreed, when Mrs. Dawson left Salisbury, that she should make application and report her success.

Soon after her departure, a summons came. Harry had as neat an outfit as could be procured by twenty dollars, eked out by his mother's judgment and skill in buying this and "making that do"—twenty dollars

Digitized by Google

left her of her earnings, after they had been recovered at Dunn's. Davis took credit to himself for leaving her so much. "The rest," he said, "would barely take him to Washington and back; but he should get his patent, and then he should show his wife that a man could earn a hundred dollars where a woman could ten. But," he concluded, "that is not their fault, poor creatures! There's a difference by nature in men and women, that's a fact!"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

HARRY'S FIRST LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

"He carried in his face the open sesame to door and heart."

"MY DEAR MOTHER:—

"Firstly, I enclose the two dollars you gave me for travelling expenses. I met Mr. Lyman on board the steamboat, and he gave me five dollars, which he said he owed me for my aid in the drawings he made for the New York architect. Fine! After the wet time of parting was over, I was in luck. Mr. Porter would not take any thing for bringing me to the boat,—thirty good miles,—because I helped him pick up apples one day after Jesse Porter broke his arm. I was pretty hungry; but hearing they charged half a dollar for supper, I bought some crackers and cheese before I went on board. So I came to the city for fifty cents. Such bustle and

Digitized by Google

confusion as there was on the wharf where we landed! I made my way through it as well as I could, and inquired the way to Chambers Street, not far, No. —, where Mrs. Dawson lives. I saw the windows were all closed, and so I sat my box of clothes down, and sat on it. I began to feel both lonesome and hungry; nothing seemed like morning — the fresh, beautiful morning of the country. The sun shining on chimneys and brick walls, instead of hill-tops and sparkling waters; not a solitary bird singing; not even a cock crowing. After a while, milkmen began to appear. There was a different one for almost every house, and each made a horrid outcry; and, after a while, a woman came out of a cellar, and took a measure of milk. Though they live in great houses, this seems poverty to me. By and by, there came a lively little driver with baskets full of bread. I remembered Dr. Franklin's account of his buying a loaf of bread and eating it as he walked through the streets of Philadelphia, when first he went there; and, though I do not expect to eat bread in kings' houses, as he afterwards did, I thought there would

Digitized by Google

be no harm in following his example; so I bought a sixpenny loaf of bread, and, with a draught of milk from a milkman, I made a good breakfast. You see, mother, I am determined to make my money last, if possible, till I can earn more, and not call on you or trouble our kind friend Mrs. Dawson. As soon as her blinds were opened, I rung. The man who opened the door smiled when I asked for Mrs. Dawson, and said she would rise in about two hours. How long those two hours were! But when they were over, and I was summoned to her, she was as kind as ever. She told me she had procured for me an excellent place in a retail shop in Broadway, where, if I did as well as my employer expected from her account of me, I should receive enough, even the first year, to pay my board. Before going there, she advised me to secure a boarding-place; she had made inquiries for this, and gave me references, and off I set. I went from one to another. At one there was a multitude of clerks, and a coarse, slatternly housekeeper; at another there was a set of low traders. I went in while they were at dinner, and a very slight observa-

Digitized by Google

tion of their vulgar manners and conversation convinced me they were not associates that I should relish or you would approve. The next was full, and the last was too filthy for any thing. As I came off the steps quite discouraged, there was a little fat lady walking before me in a gray silk gown, and a white shawl, looking as neat as a new pin. Two dirty shavers of boys had filled a squirt-gun in the gutter, and had taken aim at the lady's nice gown. I sprang upon them just in time, wrenched the squirt-gun from their hands, and sent it off out of sight. They began kicking and bawling; and she, turning round, learned the mischief they had intended. She was very thankful to me, very good natured, and talkative. She told me the gown was new, just come home, and she had put it on for a wedding-visit, — a visit to her niece's husband's first cousin; it was her best gown, too; she had heard of the boys playing such tricks; boys would be boys, &c., &c. O, mother dear! her tongue goes by machinery. (Not father's!) She had such a friendly way, and did not seem a very great

Digitized by Google

lady, and asked me so many questions, — my name, where I came from, &c., — that I thought I would tell her what I was in search of. This silenced her for a moment; then she said, "Come home with me, and we'll see what can be done. I'll talk to Plenty, — Plenty is my sister, — and perhaps — but I won't raise expectations yet. We live in Mercer Street, retired and central too."

"We were soon at her house, — a small, two-story wooden building, that looks like a mere crack between the two tall brick houses on each side of it. I followed her into a little front room. There was sitting an oldish lady, taking care of a little blind child. The child uttered a cry of delight at hearing the sound of my new friend's voice, returned her half a dozen hasty kisses, and called her 'aunty Peace;' and the old lady, into whose hands she put a piece of wedding-cake, said, 'O, thank'ee; tell us all about the wedding.' 'Directly, directly,' replied my new friend; and, bidding me sit down, and giving me a generous bit of the wedding-cake, she bustled out of the room, saying she would return in a few min-

Digitized by Google

utes. She did, and brought her sister with her, — her twin sister, — and *Peace* and *Plenty* stood before me, looking almost precisely alike, fat and full, smiling and abounding — *two* cornucopias. They could have been called nothing but Peace and Plenty, or Milk and Honey. The only difference I could see betweer them was, that Peace had a dimple in one cheek only, and Plenty in both; that Peace wore a 'front,' and Plenty her own gray hair. However, I suspect the 'front' was put on for high dress. They are droll looking, but such pleasant faces! Nice, complete sets of white teeth; and well they are so, for their mouths are never both shut. Their eyes are rather small, but bright and warm as sunshine in June, and their cheeks are rather fat, — but there is not a wrinkle near them, but a bright color on them. I did not expect to find such people in a city, so kind, so plain, so as if they were content to be themselves, and did not aim to be like any body else.

"Well, dear mother, we had a great deal of talk, which I would write, but have not time or paper. The amount of it was that (suppose me to be blush-

Digitized by Google

ing) Miss Peace was pleased with my appearance; that she felt moved towards me by my saving her new gown and shawl; that, as soon as she knew my wants, it occurred to her that, if Plenty felt as she did, they could board me. Their house was pretty full, to be sure; the old lady and her grandchild, Nannie, occupied the back room, Peace and Plenty the front chamber, her three nieces the back one, and there was nothing left but a little place over the entry, that they used for a clothes-press; but they might take the clothes out, and put me in; I should have to stand on my bed to dress, but I could keep my clothes in boxes under it, and there was room to put my arm between the wall and bed to get them, and I could hang some things up, and it would be handy reaching. I did make one suggestion, mother — Where should I put a wash-basin?

"'I like that,' said Peace, and Plenty nodded her approbation; indeed, I find it's always a voice and an echo, no matter which speaks first.

"'There's a nice little closet for washing, in the area,' she said; 'it has a window, and room for a

Digitized by Google

wash-stand and a small tub; and there's a lock on the door, and you shall have it all to yourself.'

"Now, but two points remained to be settled. Miss Peace would make suitable inquiries about me of Mrs. Dawson, because it was customary. It was enough for her to look in my face; (blushing again, dear mother.) The other point was the price of my board. 'The cost,' she thought, 'would be about two dollars; and her profits,' she said, with a smile, 'she would get out of little services I could render. It would be handy having one mankind in the house.'

"Two dollars I can pay, as Holson has promised me a salary of a hundred dollars a year, with two weeks' vacation. So, mother, I felt very happy. Miss Peace went with me to Mrs. Dawson's, without any delay; and, after a short private interview, they were both perfectly satisfied. Mrs. Dawson had heard of the twin sisters, and was rejoiced that Providence had directed me to so good a home; and my new friend's face sparkled all over, at the good account our kind benefactress had given of us. In addition to the low board, — for I find it is very low here, — the sisters

Digitized by Google

have my washing done in the house. They have one servant, and they say, that on washing-days they will do a little more for her, and it will not come hard to any one. It is all 'live and let live' here. Their nieces are three orphan girls; one but two years older than little Lucy, whom I am to carry to school and fetch home, when the days are stormy; one eight, and one fourteen, thinner, more city looking than Annie, — I mean in point of health, — but as unaffected and frank as Annie herself; and, being just about Annie's age, she seems very natural to me, and I think we shall be quite friends. Her name is Mary Hale.

"After getting all things settled in my *press-room*, I went to Mrs. Dawson, who wished to introduce me to Mr. Holson. He was very civil to our friend; but, I must confess, I did not like his looks; and his manner seemed to me both sly and fawning. He spoke of the very uncommon terms on which I was coming; of my rare good fortune — being a raw hand — in obtaining a salary; said I must thank Mrs. Dawson for it; Mrs. Dawson was one of his best customers —

Digitized by Google

hoped she would continue so; said he should expect extra service for such extra salary; mentioned some shops where no salary was paid, and others where clerks paid for their places; and said, in rather a lower voice, — still I heard him, — that dress was very important to the impression of the shop; that clerks should have a fashionable air; that my clothes were country-made; that it was a disadvantage; but, *for Mrs. Dawson's sake*, he would put up with a great deal.

"I was a little provoked, mother, but I tried to remember that you had told me, again and again, not always to expect smooth sailing; that life was a sort of checker-work, and that I must be grateful for the good, and make the best of the evil, and that what seems evil to us often turns out, in the end, to be good, &c., &c. I have far more good than evil in my fortune. Nothing can exceed Mrs. Dawson's kindness; and then my luck in my boarding-house! Mother, it will be a home to me. Mr. Holson told me to come to his shop in the evening, and he would give me his instructions. The clerks surveyed me superciliously. I heard the words 'shabby,' and 'down east,' and one

Digitized by Google

of them was ill-bred enough to touch his own neck-cloth and point to mine, and, at the same time, wink to his companion. Mother, I felt mortified, plagued; I am ashamed to confess it, but I did. I know there was a want of manliness and independence in this, and I am ashamed of it; but things look so different in New York and in Salisbury! When I left home, I felt as if you had provided every thing I could want, — as if I were a little too smart, if any thing, — and now! —— But I am determined not to give up to it. I will not sacrifice a principle to an appearance. I will not make myself one of the 'clothes people!'

"While I was at tea, Mrs. Dawson's servant brought me a note enclosing fifteen dollars — a present from her to enable me, she says, to present myself more acceptably in Mr. Holson's shop.

"This is very, very kind, very generous. But, mother, I shall not accept it. In the first place, it would be going right in the face of your instructions — 'I must depend on my own exertions.

Digitized by Google

Charities are for the helpless. A dependence on gifts, if it does not make us mean and cringing, does make us helpless.' This I learned from you; and, from my own reflection, I am sure I shall respect myself more a month hence, if I go before those impertinent young men in my plain, rather *coarsish* country clothes. So I'll face it out like a man.

"I spent the afternoon in walking round the city, and in looking at the beautiful fountains. There are three large ones, and are to be many more. The water is thrown sixty feet into the air, and then falls back in showers of jewels, as it seems when the sun shines. I sat down in Union Park, and looked and listened, till I fancied I felt the cool breath of Rhigi by the brook-side. These fountains in the city seem to me like a bit of lovely poetry in a book of tiresome prose. They are a voice from another land, a breath from home. I remained, sitting near the fountain, refreshed and thoughtful. I do not know whether it was dream or reverie, but I was coming down Rhigi with Clapham; and then

Digitized by Google

we were all kneeling around dear little Lucy's bed and Clapham was with us. Suddenly I started up, and saw the stars shining, and felt my cheeks wet with the spray or with tears, dear mother."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

JAIL COMRADES.

"Is the boy of the wicked?"

CLAPHAM was committed for trial by the justice at L——. The sittings of the Court of Common Pleas began the following week. He was instructed that he might have counsel allowed him, and might have the privilege, common to all criminals, of pleading not guilty; but he was, at the same time, told that the proofs were too strong against him to admit a hope of escape, and was advised to plead guilty, and gain favor by occasioning the least possible trouble. No boy ever more dreaded being shut up in a jail, but he was in a state of despair. He had lost, as he believed, forever, the affection, so well earned, of his beloved friends; he had lost every thing but his self-respect. This was not gone, and it was so strongly

Digitized by Google

indicated in his upward, straightforward glance, in the open expression of his face, and his quiet, and almost dignified demeanor, that his counsel did not find it difficult to get an abatement of the usual sentence in like offences, and, instead of being sent to the State Prison, he was remanded to the County Jail, to remain there for two years, beginning with one month's confinement in a dark cell.

It is a punishment almost too heavy to be borne, to be, at any age, shut up in solitude and darkness; but to this mountain boy, this free ranger over hill and valley, who had lived with

> "The mountain wind — most spiritual thing of all
> "The wide earth knows," —

to be thus caged in the growing time of youth, when activity was the law of his nature, was most painful His hours dragged heavily. At first, the future was all a blank to him. He shrank from it. It held out no hope to him, no prospect of any thing pleasant or inviting. The past was all. And over the past, in spite of the evil that had attended it, there was a golden light from the friendship of that blessed

Digitized by Google

little family that had encouraged and stimulated him. He reviewed, again and again, his past life, and he had infinite comfort in remembering many temptations he had resisted, many good resolutions he had formed, and *kept;* and, gradually, as his ideas became more settled, he felt more patient. A great many things he had heard Mrs. Davis say, and which, at the time, made little impression, and which he had quite forgotten, now recurred to his memory, and seemed to come out in letters of light. "God does not see as man sees!" "Despair and a good conscience don't keep company." "Trust in God, do right, and all will come right." These, and many others of her good, familiar sayings, were on his horizon like the first faint streaks of dawn, and, after the first throbbing agony was past, he had many peaceful waking hours. But, when he was asleep, owing to bad air and want of exercise, he had horrid dreams. His mother would seem to be lying dead-drunk upon him, and he could not remove her. His father was dragging him over stones, and through sloughs, and then he would hear smothered cries of "Murder!" and "Fire!"

Digitized by Google

and awake in a cold sweat, and shivering with ague. Once in a great while, he would have a sweet sleep, and pleasant dream of fishing down Rhigi's sparkling brook, and Annie would be standing with a basket of berries beside him, and he would feel little Lucy's warm kiss on his cheek. O, then how dreary the waking!

It seemed to Clapham, when he had passed one day in that dark cell, that the month would never come to an end; but it was soon gone — gone with its record to Him who awardeth judgment; and most happy for Clapham, that he had used some of these hours for meditation, for penitence and prayer, and for good resolutions against the day of freedom and outward temptation.

The month was gone, and Clapham was removed to a large apartment, in which were several persons, some already sentenced to a term of imprisonment, and others awaiting their trial. Some were in for grave offences, others for trivial ones. The proved guilty and the possibly innocent in close companionship! Few improvements had then been made in the jails. They were strictly places of punishment. Cor-

Digitized by Google

rection and reformation were words almost unwritten in the penal code. The criminal was then considered a hopeless outcast, not, as now, a weak, neglected, unfortunate brother, to be pitied and cared for not, as now, an infirm child, to be restrained because dangerous, to suffer because disobedient, and to be restored to trust as soon as he deserved it.

At the period of Clapham's imprisonment, there were no employments provided. If a man were industrious and ingenious, he might, perhaps, obtain materials for labor, and work on his own account; but, for the most part, the prison at L——, like others, was a scene of complete idleness. One man had a dirty pack of cards, with which he and a comrade played from morning till night, with interludes of telling fortunes, and playing tricks with them.

Others pitched coppers all day long. One man, whose wife supplied him with tobacco, smoked unceasingly; and all, with the exception of one Frenchman and a shoemaker, chewed and spit to the right hand and the left, from morning till night — a fitting pastime for a jail.

Digitized by Google

Clapham had come forth from his solitary cell with feelings that made this society most odious to him. The vulgar, profane, and indecent language he heard shocked him, and, incredible as it may seem, he sometimes wished for his solitude.

Slocum, the owner of the cards, invited him to take a hand, and offered to teach him. He saw the boy was wretched, and probably had a good-natured desire to make him less so. But, when Clapham declined his advances, he and his companion laughed at him, and, as they called it, poked fun at him. One called him a toad, and advised him to crawl back to his hole; and the other an owl, who had no use of his eyes now he had come back to daylight. The Frenchman, Deleau, took his part. He was a kind-hearted man, and ingenious, and diligent, as most Frenchmen are; for, in the worst circumstances, they can find something to do. Deleau had been in partnership with a pedler. It was proved their goods were stolen. Deleau maintained that he was ignorant of this; but the pedler escaped, and Deleau was taken, and as he could not prove his innocence, he was

Digitized by Google

sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment in the L—— jail. He spoke broken English, and was mimicked and laughed at by the jail company; but this he did not mind. He was always good humored, and ready to do small favors, and, by degrees, he became a general favorite. Even the worst people feel those little hourly acts of kindness that are the cement of society, and spread over its face cheerfulness and smiles.

"What for trouble you this little lad?" said Deleau; "you should be, for him, father and mother."

"Come to your ma', my dear," screamed Slocum, and he caught Clapham in his arms, and swung him backward and forward, singing "Rock-a-by, baby bunting." Clapham resisted manfully, struggled and kicked, till Slocum, feeling himself hurt, flew into a passion, and hit Clapham a blow in the face. He staggered and fell, bruised and bloody. The noise called up the jailer, who, on opening the door, and perceiving, as he said, that the boy had "got into a fight already," threatened to send him back to the solitary cell: and then, as if he had quite done his duty, he relocked the door.

Digitized by Google

"Monsieur Jailer is one very good keeper for de wild beast," said Deleau, "but a miserable for de young man. It signify not. I will do what I can do, in this very pretty place." He then filled his basin with water, (he had procured some comforts for his own private use,) and called Clapham to his end of the room, and while he was washing off the blood, he said. "Listen me, my dear; I will be your good friend; when you cannot be master, stay quiet."

"But I'll not be made a baby and a fool of!" said Clapham, whose temper was thoroughly roused.

"Quite to the contrary, my friend; he is the fool who makes the wrong, and he the wise little man who suffers it."

"I am not so very little either," replied Clapham, "and I'll let those fellows know I'll not be imposed on."

"You have reason, my friend; but if dey kindle a fire, what for you burn yourself up in it? No, no; keep clear of bad fellow; do nothing wid 'em; say noting to 'em. 'Tis not one very pretty place here! but we can make place for ourself. I am not happy man to be here. I do not merit it; but I could not help it. I

Digitized by Google

was stranger in de country. Nobody knew me. I was de sheep found wid de fox. But what for, my dear, cry, and lose life — de laugh is more for de health!"

"I, too, was the poor sheep found with the fox," thought Clapham; "but I *cannot* laugh."

However, the kind philosophy of the Frenchman had a good effect, and it was followed by substantial services. Deleau had purchased favors of the jailer by making rings of horse-hair for his wife and daughters. They were made of black and white hair, with names interwoven. These rings were shown, and Deleau had many applications to make more; so that, for some time, he drove quite a gaining trade. He told this to Clapham.

"The trade," he said, "has now abated; still I make two, sometime three, four a week, and four make one dollar. I have one little sum to begin the world when I leave this place. Now you shall be my partner. I teach you, and you shall have a share of my business, and in two month more, all to yourself."

Clapham's face brightened. He had again found a friend. He set about learning to weave the rings

Digitized by Google

with good heart. At first, he was awkward enough; but he was patient. Deleau encouraged him, and when Clapham thanked him, he said, "Very well, my dear. I like to hear 'thank you;' it is good of manner; and de boy of your country are as fraid of manner as if dey were small-pox; but what please me more than words is your face, and your voice, no no longer miserable. Dere, dat bit is fine! Now make one all yourself. Put in dat name you like best."

Clapham began with fresh zeal. Deleau, who was singing over his own work, now and then cast a side-long glance at Clapham, to assure himself the boy made no mistake. "It is done!" said Clapham, showing it to his master, with a smile of satisfaction, "and all right, I—I believe."

"Bravo! bravo, my friend! as right as if Monsieur Deleau had done it himself! '*Annie!*' dat is de name you like best?"

"No, no. *Harry* is the name I like best in the world; but boys do not wear rings, so I made it for Harry's sister Annie; but neither Harry nor Annie,"

Digitized by Google

he concluded, with a sigh, "will wear a ring of my making, now."

"Never despair, my dear friend; good people forgive and forget. Put up de ring safe; one bright day you may put it on Mademoiselle Annie finger for a wedding-ring."

"O, never! never! never in the world! A wedding-ring! How foolish, Mr. Deleau!"—"As if I should ever be married," thought Clapham; "and if I were, as if ever Annie Davis would look at such a thing as I am — a jail-bird."

Not many days after this, fortunately for Deleau, unfortunately for Clapham, Deleau received a permit to leave the prison. The pedler, his former partner, had been taken. He had confessed his guilt, and averred Deleau's innocence. This came to the knowledge of a young lawyer, who had defended Deleau at the time of his commitment, and who had then become interested in the poor Frenchman. He had voluntarily taken the pains to procure Deleau's release. "I am as sorry to leave you," he said to Clapham, at parting, "as if you were my own poor

Digitized by Google

little boy. I had once one little boy." For the first time, Clapham saw his eyes fill with tears; he wiped them away, and proceeded, "He is gone to de good God. De sweetest flowers are always taken for de Paradise."

"So they are!" exclaimed Clapham. He though of little Lucy.

"Ah, we must all finish!" resumed Deleau "perhaps de sooner de better."

"I think so, Mr. Deleau."

"Ah, you must not tink so. You are too young to tink so. A cloudy morning may turn out very bright day — first rate! So, I expect, will Clapham. Courage, my good boy! When you come out of dis pretty place, write to Paul Deleau, New York. While you stay here, make de ring; or do someting, always do someting. Above all, keep away from de bad fellow wid de cards and de pitch-penny."

They parted, and poor Clapham felt desolate enough. The ring trade had become very dull. The jailer took no pains to dispose of them. Clapham, however, went on making them as long as his

Digitized by Google

materials lasted. Then the jailer was surly, and would procure him no more. So Clapham fell back into inevitable idleness. His days dragged heavily on. He very civilly asked the jailer to bring him a spelling-book, at the same time telling him he had plenty of money to pay him for it. The jailer, at first, made a sort of half promise he would attend to it; but, when Clapham again and again reminded him of it, he became vexed, and said he had something else to do than to be bothered with buying spelling-books for chaps. Slocum had been for some days watching Clapham, and had become wonderfully civil to him. Slocum's wife had brought him a basket of apples and gingerbread. He offered Clapham a share. Clapham took it, and thanked him.

"Now, that's friendly," he said; "I knew you was not a boy to bear malice. I told Dick Hunt, when that outlandish Frenchman went away, you would find out we were full as good friends to you as he Come, don't be sucking your thumbs all day. Sit down here, and look over the cards. You will soon know how to play as well as we." Clapham drew up

Digitized by Google

to them and became interested. Slocum winked to his companion. "To-morrow you shall take a hand," he said; "there's no harm in life in playing when there's nothing else to do." It soon became too dark to discern the spots on the cards; and, no lights being allowed in the prison, the cards were put aside.

Clapham had no sooner lain down on his bed for the night, than the thought came to him like a blow, "How could I forget Mr. Deleau's advice to keep clear of Slocum? I am sorry! sorry! But what shall I do with these everlasting long days? If I had any kind of a book, perhaps I might spell out the words. Perhaps Plum will let me wax his threads for him. I'll try him." It was a good consequence of Clapham's solitary confinement, that he had acquired the habit, so soon as he laid himself down, of considering his past conduct and future duties.

When the jailer presented himself the next morning, Clapham begged him to lend him any old book. "But you can't read," said the man, gruffly. "Per-

Digitized by Google

haps I can learn," urged Clapham. "And what use will you make of it? No, no; the less such as you know the better." And thus this ignorant man disappointed Clapham, and himself lost one golden opportunity of doing good and kindness.

Thus rebuffed, Clapham turned to his last hope; and a forlorn hope was that forbidding-faced man, Plum. Poor Clapham timidly approached him. "I say, Mr. Plum," he began, in a low voice, for he dreaded Slocum and Hunt's laugh; "don't you want a 'prentice?" No answer; and he repeated the question. Plum shook his head. "I'll not plague you," continued Clapham; "I'll begin with waxing the threads."

"You'll break and waste."

"Only try me, Mr. Plum." Again Plum shook his head. "I can at least hammer the soles for you." Again a decisive shake of the head. "Do let me try, Mr. Plum, I am so tired doing nothing. I soon learned to make rings of Mr. Deleau; why can't I learn to make shoes?"

"And then sell them on your own account, as you did the rings, hey? I can make myself all that

Digitized by Google

will sell. If you don't learn it will be bother, and if you do learn it will be loss." Still Clapham urged. He had felt the good and happiness of occupation — that it could even make the hours glide lightly on in that loathsome jail. "I will try my best, Mr. Plum," he said; "as long as I stay in this place, I will work for you. I promise you."

"Promise! hum! What is the promise of the like of you worth?"

"I am not a liar!" said Clapham, coloring up to the very roots of his hair.

"That's more than I know or believe. Boys is no use; I hate them — I always did."

"And they will hate you," replied Clapham, his too quick temper rising beyond his control; "you are a hateful and hard-hearted man!"

Clapham had unconsciously raised his voice. Slocum and Hunt cried out, "Hurrah! that's it, my boy! go it, Clap! you're coming on; pay it on to the old carrion!"

Clapham did not answer them. He slunk away by himself, ashamed of having said any thing these

Digitized by Google

bad men applauded. Slocum and Hunt thought this too good an occasion to renew their attack on Clapham to be lost. They knew he had two or three dollars which he had earned in the ring trade; this money — this precious means of procuring rum and tobacco, for which they were always hankering — they were pretty sure of getting possession of, if they could once cajole him into playing. But all their solicitations were, as yet, in vain. The poor, tempted boy was, as yet, steadfast in his firm resolutions. The memory of his friends was, as yet, a guardian angel to him.

We may as well conclude this chapter with a brief notice of Plum, who was a very strong illustration of a passion that, in a greater or less degree, wofully prevails in our land, — a strong but a singular illustration of it, — for, if our people are avaricious, they are often very generous, sometimes profuse. If Clapham had not been urged on by the keenest desire of employment, Plum's aspect must have repelled him. He was short and spare, with a little head bent forward; his face was shrunken, and his skin

Digitized by Google

shrivelled like an overbaked pear; his sunken eye glowed like a coal of fire in a dark place; his thin lips, sharply closed, seemed scarcely to have smiled, even when he was a baby in his mother's arms; he did not appear as if there had ever in his life been a period of youth and freshness. One passion — a *greed of gain* — had ruled him from childhood; he was now past fifty. He had no wife, no children, no one to provide for, and certainly he never allowed himself an indulgence from the fruit of his labor. Still, for fifty years, he had toiled from daylight to dark, as if to save himself from starvation. His shoe-shop was in a small town near L——. He was a man of few words, quiet and inoffensive; doing, as was believed, neither good nor harm. It is true that he had been several times suspected of making false charges; but they were so petty, and the man so industrious, and so free from temptation to fraud, that the persons wronged concluded there was some mistake, and let it pass.

There was a tannery in Plum's neighborhood, from which its proprietor had missed leather; never,

Digitized by Google

however, more than one hide at a time; so he made no fuss about it, though he was much troubled by being forced to suspect one person after another. He was detained in the tanyard, one day, much beyond his usual time; it was starlight. He perceived a man crouched, burdened, and stealing along by the fence. He followed him till the person entered Plum's house; and he saw that it was Plum himself. One may imagine Plum's dismay, when, two hours after, the tanner entered his dwelling with a sheriff and search-warrant. What a dwelling for an industrious man! One apartment was a work-shop, and the other — not much larger than a coffin — served him for kitchen and bed-room. The tanner and sheriff proceeded to a loft and cellar, and both were filled with stolen property, for the most part of little value; and, except the few hides he had stolen from the tanner, of no worth to Plum. It was almost laughable that, among other lumber, there was a bat and ball, and a sled that a little boy, through all the pleasant coasting days of winter, had missed and mourned. Plum seemed to have stolen them

Digitized by Google

from the mere passion of acquisition, or, perhaps, as he said to Clapham, he truly hated boys, and had a dreary pleasure in spoiling their sport. At last, buried in the cellar, under every thing else, the searchers discovered bags of specie, assorted; dollars in one, half dollars in another, and so on, down to a bag of cents. While they were counting the money, — which amounted to fourteen hundred and forty dollars and thirty-two cents, — Plum, who, till then, had been silent, only becoming more and more livid, began to cry and wring his hands, and offer to pay double the price of the hides if they would go away and leave him. The tanner told him the matter had gone too far; he was in the sheriff's hands; but he would befriend him if he would tell him how he had come to the pass of prowling about nights like a hungry fox, and preying upon others' property, when he had plenty of his own.

The amount of his confession was, that he had been a working, saving lad from the beginning; that he was honest at first, but he loved money (the poor wretch called it *gain*) so well that he sold his

Digitized by Google

school-books, and whatever little presents were given him, and laid up the money. Even in those early days, nothing pleased him like making "a good bargain."

His first theft was during his apprenticeship, — small bits of leather, with which he cobbled shoes at an under price when the shop was shut, and his master believed he was in bed. Then he took leather enough for a pair of shoes, of which he made private sale; and so he had gone on, from year to year, increasing his burden of guilt and fear, and gaining — what? some round bits of silver and copper to bury in his cellar, when stones would have served that purpose as well.

But are there not men with a wider horizon than Plum's, as diligent, and more fortunate, who accumulate gains and go on getting, each new load pressing a little more of the life-blood out of their hearts? The earth, instead of being fed from their fountains with streams of liberality and gladness, is, for them, converted into a banking-house, whose

Digitized by Google

vaults are filled with gold and silver; (fearful witnesses at the last tribunal!) and Heaven is to them a brazen, arid vault, to which no breath of love or gratitude ascends from others; which no prayer of faith or hope of theirs can pierce.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

A CLERK'S TRIALS.

"Some men employ one portion of their lives to make the other miserable."

HARRY DAVIS had a much harder struggle than appeared by his letter to his mother, in refusing Mrs. Dawson's gift of the fifteen dollars. It was accompanied by a note, in which, with the most delicate kindness, she urged its acceptance. Harry was to enter the shop the next day, a stranger to its modes of business, under a master who had not made, to say the least of it, a favorable impression on him, — with new associates, who too often look with a critical eye on a new-comer. To all this was to be added the disadvantage of appearing in a garb that had already excited a demonstration of displeasure from Holson and sinister looks from his clerks. If it be considered what the temptations are to dress in a city under

Digitized by Google

ordinary circumstances, and how great a majority of men and women, young and old, yield to them, Harry's perseverance in his resolution must be allowed to border on heroism. It must be confessed that he rose even earlier than usual the next morning; that he took extraordinary pains in polishing his boots; that he arranged his hair most carefully; and (he can afford to have this little weakness told) that he tied and retied, a half dozen times, his plaid cotton neckcloth, and at last turned away from his three-inch glass, saying, with a sigh, "Hang it! I cannot make it set like those fellows'! There's no use in trying."

Peace and Plenty were not larks in the morning; but, being aware that Harry's duty was to open the shop, and that he must be there at an early hour, they kindly prepared his breakfast over night; and, though he protested he wanted nothing more than bread and a glass of water, he found then, and from that time henceforth, prepared neatly, on a little waiter, bread, butter, and a bit of cold meat. Our motherly maidens said they did not "hold to setting a growing boy to work on bread and water."

Digitized by Google

We pass over the few first weeks of Harry's novitiate, and will make extracts from his letters, which will best tell his experience. We shall be compelled to intersperse the extracts with a few notes, as Harry did not choose to communicate to his mother all the discomforts of his situation.

After having been a month at work, "I am beginning," he says, "to feel more easy in the harness, dear mother. If it yet galls in some places, there are others that have already become callous, and do not feel it. Eugene Nevis was the youngest clerk, when I came in, and I became, in his place, prince of the lamps and knight of the broom. Eugene is a gentleman's son, and a real gentleman in his spirit; well-bred and kind-hearted. From the first, he has treated me as if I were his equal in every way. He even said, the first time I trimmed the lamps and swept the shop, 'I feel how much you have the advantage of me, by knowing how to do these things. When I began sweeping, I blistered my hands; and I had a regular scolding every day from Holson and the head clerks. And, as to the lamps, I daubed

Digitized by Google

them, and spilled the oil, and my poor father had to pay Holson twenty dollars for the damage I occasioned the goods. I don't believe it amounted to that, but Holson is a skin-flint every way.' Dear mother, I thank you for every thing you taught me. I find that no knowledge, be it even so humble as how to fill a lamp well, comes amiss. Little did I think, when I swept the rooms for you every day while you were nursing Annie through her long fever, that I was studying for a New York clerkship. The clerks, for the most part, were pleased to find a clean shop and bright lamps, and they treated me more civilly than, by all accounts, they usually do new-comers. One, to be sure, mean fellow asked me where I last served as chambermaid, and another called me 'Betty, and so on; but I had nerved myself to bear it, and when they saw that I was tolerably manly, and no 'Betty,' they changed their tone. There are two or three among them (we have twelve clerks) whom I do not at all like; they are ostentatious and mean, ignorant and arrogant. They have precious little instruction from books, and not one tithe of the knowledge which

Digitized by Google

poor Clapham got from an ever wide-awake observation of nature. Country life for me, mother. Mr. Edward Rice is our head clerk. He wears a gold chain and satin waistcoat, and so on, and has a very *genteel* air, which Mr. Holson thinks attracts customers; underbred ones I rather think it does; but the coarse-grained wood shows through the high varnish. The gold chain notwithstanding, Mr. Edward refused yesterday to subscribe a sixpence for a sick clerk whom Holson had turned off. I doubt if he had a sixpence. When I put down half a dollar, he raised his eyebrows till I thought they would roll over the other side, and he said, 'Flush for a freshman! Straws show which way the wind blows.' I knew he meant to intimate a suspicion against me. I felt hot. I did not speak, but I looked him steadily in the eye; his fell, and I walked off to my business, satisfied that he felt hotter than I. But I like even him, I like them all, better than Holson himself.

"I have told you, my dear mother, that I did not like Holson. I like him less and less every day. Kind

Digitized by Google

Mrs Dawson has been blinded by his intensely obliging manner to customers. If she could see behind the scenes, she would be disgusted with his selfishness, his rapacity, his ill-temper, and tyranny. To me, his sycophancy to his customers, and his mean ways, are most revolting — sometimes ludicrous. If a lady asks for pink silk, and he has not it, he tries to persuade her that red is pink, or that cherry is more fashionable than pink, or crimson richer, or scarlet more becoming, and the worst of it is, he does persuade half the women. Yesterday he was outwitted. A lady was looking at the silks. She fixed her attention on one. Holson, who is very quick at detecting a lady's fancies, thought it was a sure nibble, as poor Clapham used to say; and, as usual, he set to work to obviate whatever objections she might raise against it. I must say, ladies are pretty ingenious at this. 'Quite a charming thing that,' he said; 'just opened. I bought the only case of these silks in this city.' 'I saw the same pattern at Beck's,' said the lady, dryly. 'Ah, indeed! did you? Possibly Mr. Beck imports.' He tried another bait, often successful. 'I sold a dress

Digitized by Google

off this to Miss Liston.' 'Indeed!' exclaimed the lady; 'but what Miss Liston?' 'Really, I don't quite know.' 'Then I cannot buy it, and run the dreadful risk of its being Miss Liston, the grocer's daughter, and not Miss Liston of the Fifth Avenue. In short, Mr. Holson, I prefer to be a leader, and not a follower.'

"'Ah — indeed — very good!' said the fellow, with one of his odious convulsive little titters. 'Upon my word, I think this piece has not been cut, after all. Rice, it was quite a different thing Miss Liston bought?' 'Quite,' said Rice, and Miss Liston was dismissed. 'I was looking for a fatigue dress,' said the lady, still hovering over the same piece of silk. 'Just the thing, then, madam; you see it is dust-color, adapted for riding or walking.' 'It must be suitable for an evening dress,' persisted the lady. 'Exactly, madam. A change of ribbons and a lace cape — we have loves just opened — makes it an evening dress at once.'

"'I was looking for a summer silk ——'

"'Just the thing, ma'am.'

"'But,' she said, chopping round again, 'I always buy a silk for wear.'

Digitized by Google

"'Of course, ma'am, of course. You see this is quite solid.'

"'How do you think it will do for travelling, Mr. Holson?' 'Admirably; *the* thing. A mantilla over it. — we have them at all prices — makes it quiet at once!'

"Still the lady did not come to the desired point, and Holson, hardly concealing his impatience, said, 'What objection *can* you make to it, ma'am?'

"'None in the world,' she replied, coolly turning on her heel, and walking out of the shop, 'but that it does not suit my fancy!'

"It was not very dignified for a lady to play at his own game with Holson; but, I confess, I was pleased to see him beaten, and I betrayed my satisfaction by a smile. Holson saw it. I was standing at his elbow; and he looked like a thunder-cloud, and he has been more testy to me than usual ever since."

"Yesterday, an intelligent looking gentleman came into the shop, and introduced himself to Holson as one of the trustees of the Mercantile Library. He said,

Digitized by Google

looking round upon us, that he had taken advantage of a rainy day, when he believed he should not interrupt us, to call and solicit our subscriptions, or rather to offer us an opportunity to subscribe to the 'Mercantile Library Association.' He presumed most of the young men in so prosperous an establishment as Mr. Holson's were acquainted with the institution; but those that were not, he would inform that it comprised a good library, carefully selected, and a reading-room warmed and lighted, to which any clerk could obtain access every evening by paying an initiation fee of one dollar, and two dollars annual subscription. This also entitles him to draw a book from the library every week. He then went on to say to Holson, that of course every gentleman at the head of such an establishment as his, must feel a deep responsibility for the young men in his employment, and under his guardianship; that he must feel painfully anxious to shield them from the temptations incident to idle hours in a large city; and to provide for them innocent and profitable occupation. 'The retail shop,' he said, 'was often the threshold

Digitized by Google

to a higl commercial position, and it was very important tu the young men to be furnishing their minds with the knowledge befitting an honorable station; that the time had gone, or was going by, when merchants and traders were looked down upon by an idle class; that our merchants were our princes, and they should show the world what stuff princes should be made of. He said that every American lad should know what was requisite to make a man a man; fine clothes were not; fine friends were not; but probity and a well-informed mind were. The first every merchant would be careful to inculcate for his own sake, by precept and example, (mercy, mother! he did not know Holson,) and to promote the last, the Mercantile Library had been instituted. He hoped the young men would be as eager to subscribe as he was desirous to have them.' He first presented his paper to poor *Deacon* Carey, as the boys call our book-keeper — a thin, pale, sad man, both bald and gray. He shook his head, and declined; but said, respectfully, 'I have neither money nor time, sir; if had I would subscribe, if it were

Digitized by Google

only for the sake of my lame son.' The stranger bowed, and passed on to Mr. Rice. Rice shrugged his shoulders, and said books were so cheap it was not worth his while. 'But,' urged the stranger, 'you will have the advantage of a reading-room open, lighted, and warmed till ten o'clock in the evening.'

"'A gay place!' said Rice, with a contemptuous curl of his lip. I never saw a calmer tempered man than this gentleman; he did not seem in the least nettled. Without paying the slightest attention to Rice's sneer, he said, 'There is a greater variety of reading, and better selected, in the library than you will find in the cheap prints; and besides, these *cheap prints* are a tremendous expense to your eyes.' Rice shrugged his shoulders and shook his head, and Holson said, 'Pass on, sir, if you please; pass on. The boys are wasting time.' Wasting time! Mother, I believe Holson thinks time was given to spend in making money, and for nothing else. As it proved, the gentleman's good arguments, though lost on Rice, had their effect on the rest. Six out of the twelve set down their names; I among the six. Now, mother, don't you

Digitized by Google

and Annie stare as did Holson and Edward Rice. Let Annie cast up my account.

"Travelling expenses, ... 50

"Subscription to the sick clerk, ... 50

"Initiation fee, ... 1 00

"I could afford to subscribe. I have three dollars remaining of my five. I hope to earn something over and above my salary before the year is out; but if I do not, I have enough in reserve to pay my library fees, and one dollar for extras. O, one thing I must not forget to tell you, it pleased me so much. I signed last, and was at the desk, returning the pen to Mr. Carey, when the gentleman said to him, 'Put your name down. I will see to the fees for this year at least, and I dare say this young man' (looking at me) 'will take the trouble to draw out the books for your lame boy.' Mr. Carey smiled,—the first smile I have seen on his face since I have been in Holson's shop; and he looked cheerful all day. It is pleasant for those who have money to go round buying smiles and cheerfulness for those whose fate is hard, like poor Carey's. Don't you think so, mother?"

Digitized by Google

Harry had many vexations to endure, of which he made no report to his mother. Those clerks,—at their head Edward Rice,—who took airs on themselves, put all odd jobs on Harry, and he was sometimes kept at the shop till nine, ten, and eleven o'clock, though the nominal hour of closing it was eight. He was patient, because he was manly, and determined not to fret about trifles. Trifles he called them; but they deprived him of his greatest enjoyment—his reading, and his pleasant social hours at his happy home. A much more serious trouble to him was the continual displeasure and fault-finding of Holson. "It's all your fault," he said, "Davis, that Eugene Nevis has left the shop. Not that I care for the rascal; I can get twenty better clerks in his place; but it's your (we omit the word with which he graced it) —— country notions. His relations were good customers, and now they have all quit, for he has told his own story."

Nevis did tell his own story, which was, that, stimulated by Harry Davis's example, he had absolutely refused to make the false representations which Holson insisted on as the common course of business

Digitized by Google

That common course was, to say to a lady, "You had better buy this dress now, ma'am; it's the last we have of it;" when, perhaps, there were half a dozen pieces of the same on the shelf; or, "I sold this muslin yesterday for five shillings, which I now offer to you for four." "You will not find another velvet so cheap as this in New York," &c., &c.; and uniformly to assure the buyers that every article was offered below cost. A lady was one day looking at an expensive muslin, and said to Harry, "I doubt this color. Do you know if it washes?"

"No, it does not, ma'am."

She looked surprised at his unexpected frankness, and smiled.

"Thank you," she said, and left the shop. Holson was engaged with a customer, but Harry perceived that he overheard and oversaw the transaction. He took the first opportunity of abusing Harry outrageously. He would have struck him, if he had dared. Soon after, another customer came, to whom Holson himself showed the same muslin. She asked the same troublesome question. "O, I'll warrant it," said Hol-

Digitized by Google

son. Thereupon the lady took it, and, on the faith of Mr. Holson's warranty, brought it back the next day. Holson said, "Of course he would take it back; but the lady must take something else out of his shop. She had no occasion for any thing else. She wanted nothing but a muslin gown. There was no redress without more trouble than it was worth, and she retained the fading *warranted* muslin.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOOK-KEEPER.

"Deep malice makes too deep incision."

THE spring business had begun, and Harry was more than ever confined to the shop. He became pale, and every day paler and thinner. He dreamed of country breezes, swelling buds, early flowers, and the full spring chorus of birds; but, instead of all this, he was waked by the harsh sound of the first wheel rolling over the pavement. He hurried to the shop, not to leave it, at night, till he could scarcely drag his weary limbs home. His kind hostesses became anxious about him. Miss Peace advised a blue pill taken twice a week, as "rulable in the spring;" and Plenty, when Harry shook his head at this, suggested that camomile tea, three times a day, would strengthen him. But Harry

Digitized by Google

insisted that nothing would do this, if not the good bread and meat of their table. How and when he should pay for this bread and meat, now wore upon him more than his work and confinement. When his quarter's salary became due, Holson had put him off; and, when Harry repeated his request for his dues, and urged the necessity of paying his board, Holson told him that if he did not wait till it was convenient to pay him, he might whistle for his money; that he could get clerks enough without wages. Unfortunately, Harry had no written contract; and Mrs. Dawson, the only person whose testimony could aid him, had suddenly gone to the West Indies for health. No word or sign from the good sisters intimated that Harry was behindhand; but he was too honest, too manly, to continue to be a charge to them, and he resolved, if Holson did not pay him at the end of the six months, which would now be in two days, he would leave his employment, and get another, even if it were domestic service, that would enable him to pay his debt. His painful impatience was increased by hearing old Mrs. Bland say to Mary

Digitized by Google

Hale, "I never saw your aunts wear their old bonnets out on Easter Sunday before. What is the reason?" "Why," said Mary, "I am sure, Mrs. Bland, aunts' bonnets look very decent." "Yes, decent; but, in twenty years, I have never known them go to church, on Easter Sunday, with their old bonnets." "The reason is, grandmother," said blind Nannie Bland —— "Hush, Nannie!" said Mary; but the little girl either did not hear or did not heed. "Aunty Peace says that they have not any money till Harry pays them." "O Nannie!" said Mary, deprecatingly. Her eyes met Harry's. He smiled, but it was a smile of the deepest mortification. Mary understood it, and felt tears of sympathy coming, and she left the room. Harry followed her, and explained his embarrassment; and Mary begged him not to be troubled, and said, in their kind spirit, that her aunts would rather never have new bonnets than he should leave them. This was quite true, and this might have been the consequence to them, for they had scarcely an unappropriated shilling. Their income was one thousand dollars. With this

Digitized by Google

they maintained in independence their comfortable little establishment. They boarded their old friend, widow Bland, for just enough to cover the expense, "throwing in," as they termed it, "blind Nannie; she being such an interesting child, it was only a pleasure; and she ate like a Canary." They supported their three orphan nieces; many an old friend was welcomed to their hospitable table. They rented a pew in the church their parents attended before them, took a weekly paper, a religious magazine, and subscribed to two charitable societies. Had they not more enjoyment from money with their one thousand dollars, than some rich men with their millions?

Truly, contentment with godliness *is* great gain.

Harry's affairs were approaching a crisis. Till this should be past, he had resolved to make no mention of his anxieties to his mother.

There was one person in Holson's shop, a far greater sufferer than Harry. This was Carey, the book-keeper. He was an amiable man, rather inefficient from protracted ill health, and timid from continued misfortunes. His wife was a feeble woman,

Digitized by Google

and his children sickly. His whole life had been under a dreary, leaden sky. He had ceased to hope, but always looked for something worse.

At a period of uncommon pressure to poor Carey, and of elated prosperity to Holson, he had lent his book-keeper a few hundred dollars; and, from that time, he had kept him under the harrow. Whenever he had any purpose to gain, he would threaten to withhold his salary, or to seize his furniture to satisfy the debt. For two or three weeks, Harry had observed that Carey was unusually dejected; that he was every evening behindhand with his books; and, one evening, after watching him going over and over the same column of figures, and then leaning dejectedly on his elbow, he said, modestly, to Carey, "You do not seem quite well, sir. I am a pretty good accountant; perhaps I can assist you."

"You are very kind," replied Carey; "perhaps you can. I have made some mistake here. I cannot detect it. I believe I am losing my head."

"O, no," said Harry, cheerfully; "go and sit on that old sofa at the end of the shop, and rest your

Digitized by Google

head. Rest is all it wants, and that it wants enough." Poor Carey went, stiff and languid, and with but half a man's life in him. Harry soon detected the error, and rectified the figures.

"It is all right, Mr. Carey," he said. "Can I do any thing else?"

"O, thank you, yes. If you will look at the two last pages of last week's accounts, you will see they are not footed. But it will keep you too late; you too are tired."

"Not sick-tired, as you are; not at all too tired to do this. You take a little doze, and I will wake you when it's done."

So Harry went to work with a clear head and willing heart; and, in an hour's time, the accounts, that were the despair of the poor old book-keeper, were adjusted, and he went behind the screen to wake Carey. He was not sleeping; he was too care-worn and anxious to sleep. The tears came in his eyes when he thanked Harry. "I do not know your match," he said; "you are one by yourself, Harry Davis." But there seemed no sense of relief; the

Digitized by Google

spring of his mind was broken. After a minute, he rose, walked slowly to the desk, locked it, and left the shop in complete absence of mind, without even bidding Harry good night.

The next day, Harry's salary fell due, and he took an opportunity of reminding Holson of it. Holson said it was not convenient to pay it, and he must wait. Harry said, manfully, he could *not* wait. Holson replied, he should "wait and do nothing else."

Harry then said, calmly, "I shall leave your service this evening, Mr. Holson." Holson stared.

"And a pretty box you'll be in," he said. "There's no other such fool as I, to engage to give a raw boy wages. I'll give you no character."

Harry, though a modest young man, was not to be bullied out of his rights, or his self-possession.

"No character that you could give would be of service to me, Mr. Holson," he said, calmly; "but I have friends."

"Who, who, who?" cried Holson, angrily interrupting him.

"The good, honest people I live with."

Digitized by Google

"He! he! he! the old maids!"

"And," resumed Harry, "Mr. Nevis, — Eugene Nevis's father."

"What, Mr. Russel Nevis?"

"The same — father of the clerk who left you after I came. Perhaps you have forgotten him."

Holson bit his lips with vexation. "*You* know Mr. Russel Nevis! I don't believe a word of it."

"I have dined with him every Sunday for the last month, and he has invited me to continue to do so, till he goes to the country."

"A pretty figure you must cut at Mr. Nevis's table," said Holson, his eyes reconnoitring Harry's dress insultingly. Harry stood his ground unflinchingly. Holson's temper was boiling; but, with all his blustering, his passion, and his love of tyranny, he was wary and cautious. He was conscious that Mr. Nevis was a powerful friend, and that he had no good opinion of him. He was certain Harry spoke pure truth, for he had never been able, by menace or persuasion, to induce him to deviate from it; and, more than all, he was aware that Harry was the

Digitized by Google

best clerk in his shop, the most solicitous to perform his duty to him, and most acceptable to his customers; and therefore, when Harry said again, decidedly, "If you do not pay me my salary to-day, you have violated your contract, and I am released from mine, and shall leave you." Holson, without saying another word, gave him a draft for the fifty dollars. A knave is no match for an honest man, if he be capable.

"Mr. Holson," said Harry, in the same firm voice he had sustained through the interview, "I consider myself released from my engagement with you, by your failure to perform your part of the contract. You have subjected me to mortification, and my friends to inconvenience, by failing to pay me when my money was due. I shall consult my friend, Mr. Nevis, and shall be governed by his advice, either to remain with you the remaining six months, or to leave you on Monday."

Holson stared at Harry as if he were something he did not comprehend. His anger rose, but he felt that, if he gave way to it, it would be like the wave beating against a rock, and, muttering a curse, he turned away

Digitized by Google

What gave such power to a poor country boy? High and right aims. Not an aim at riches or external distinctions of any sort, but an aim to be true in all the relations of life; to act up to the convictions of his due; to resist temptations, small and great; and to develop his faculties by all the means allotted to him. Thus fortified with the true spirit of a man, a knave could not oppress, nor a flashy clerk look him out of countenance.

It was Saturday, bad weather, and a dull day in the shop. Holson was more irritable than usual, abusing some of the clerks, and fretting at all. Harry observed him repeatedly speaking earnestly to Carey, and that Carey made no reply, and looked even more wretched, more ill, more dejected, than ever before.

"Poor deacon!" said one of the clerks, jogging Harry's elbow; "do look at him, rubbing his forehead, and his eye wandering about as if he saw nothing; I should not wonder if he were to cut his throat."

"Nor should I," said Harry, with a sigh of deep compassion. He turned, and saw Holson at his elbow,

Digitized by Google

and was sure, from a certain conscious look, that he had heard him.

Saturday evening was busier than any other evening of the week. Harry had got every thing in order, and waited an hour for Carey to be done. He then asked him if he could assist him. "No," said Carey, "nobody can help me. My poor wife! My poor children!" He laid his head down on his desk, and gave way to a flood of tears.

"O Mr. Carey," said Harry, "you are tired out — you are used up."

Carey shook his head. "It is not that," he said.

"Tell me what it is, then," said Harry; "or tell some other friend. My mother always says there is no burden that can't be lightened by a friend's helping you bear it."

"You are kind." Carey raised his head, and wiped away his tears. "I have got to be a mere child. There's no use in struggling any longer."

"Do go home now, Mr. Carey, and let me come and see you to-morrow."

"No, I cannot go home yet; but you must go.

Digitized by Google

Leave the key, and come to-morrow to my house and get it. It always does poor Johnny good to see you. It is too late to do me good." Harry saw he was not to be persuaded, and he took his hat and bade him good night.

Soon after, there was a knock at the door. Carey opened it, and Holson came in; and, as soon as Carey resumed his seat, he said, as if continuing a previous conversation, "It's all before you now — choose! Break with me, and see who will employ you Go round and ask for a place with your bent body, and blue lips, and hands shaking like the palsy."

"It's serving you, and serving you faithfully, Mr. Holson, that's bent my body and made my hands shake."

"Have not I paid you for it? — lent you money too?"

"Yes," replied Carey, speaking with a little more spirit; "and that's been the chain that bound me down to this desk, and you knew it. It may be as well broken now as ever."

Digitized by Google

"And you, and your wife, and your children, starving in a bunch — hey, Carey?" Holson spoke in a softer and more persuasive tone, as he added, "Don't be a fool. I say again, do what I want of you; there is no risk to you, — no risk, and great gain. I will give you up your note to me, and a check for two hundred dollars!" There was no answer from Carey but a deep-drawn sigh; and Holson went on to particularize exactly what he wanted done, which was an alteration of certain entries in the accounts, in order to cover a fraudulent transaction of his, which was on the eve of detection. The change could only be made by the hand that had kept the accounts. "Let it be well done, and soon done, Carey," he concluded. "Promise me, only promise me, that you will come here to-morrow and do it. I will trust to your word, and give you up, on the spot, your note and the check. Yes, I'll make the check three hundred, and trust entirely to your truth, if you give me the promise."

"To my truth, Mr. Holson! Then there's something left, thank God! I have not worked and suf-

Digitized by Google

fered like a dog for nothing!" He laughed loud and unnaturally, and then, recovering himself, he stood up, and speaking courageously, and with fresh life, he said, "I'll not do it — never! If all else is gone, truth and honesty are left. We may starve. God's will be done. I have decided, Mr. Holson."

"Holson walked up and down the shop hurriedly. He then returned to the desk, and said, in a determined voice, "I have decided, too. I did not come here, to-night, till I had fully revolved this subject, and made up my mind what to do. I knew you were a fool, and I thought you might be obstinate. I prepared two strings to my bow. One was put into my head by overhearing something that passed between John Bell and that cursed fellow Davis. They both thought your mind shaken, and that you were on the point of committing suicide. If you are found dead at this desk to-morrow morning, I shall summon these boys before the inquest, and the verdict will surely be, 'Throat cut by his own hand!' Here is a knife, and I swear I'll finish you, unless you promise me instantly — not one breath's delay — yes, or no?"

Digitized by Google

Holson was a desperate man. Ruin — utter disgrace — stared him in the face, and disappointment, rage, and vengeance, hurried him on. Carey's knees knocked together. "Yes, or no?" réiterated Holson.

Carey's tongue was parched with fear and horror. He tried to utter "no;" he could not move his lips.

"Speak!" cried Holson, holding up the knife.

God gave his servant strength; he said, audibly and clearly, "No!"

Holson seized Carey by the throat. He gasped; he could not make a sound. At that moment, Harry Davis sprang on Holson, grasped him by the collar, and released Carey, who sank, fainting, to the floor. Holson staggered back to the wall, stunned with the horror of detection, powerless and silent. There was a glass of water on the desk; Harry dashed it in Carey's face, and reanimated him with a voice of encouragement. "Fear nothing," he said; "the danger is past. Come with me; lean on me. I will see you safe home." After some effort, Carey rallied and left the shop with Harry.

Digitized by Google

It was probable that Holson had expected to intimidate Carey into compliance, and had not deliberately planned his murder; but to what extremity he might have been urged by his savage and roused passion, if Harry had not interposed, it is impossible to say.

It may be remembered that Harry, after offering his assistance to Carey in settling his accounts, bade him good night. He was so struck with the expression of despair on the poor man's countenance, that, instead of going away, he turned, unperceived, and stole back to a sofa, screened from observation by a curtain, so arranged that Holson might take his lunch there when detained at the shop by a pressure of business. There Providence stationed Harry as a guardian angel to poor Carey.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

LIFE IN JAIL—A SURPRISE.

"My son, thou art yet to be tried upon the earth, and to be exercised in many things."

We left Clapham reposing with the peace of good resolutions. They gained force from the steadying effect of sleep. The next morning Hunt and Slocum renewed their solicitations. They did not care for him, or his companionship; but they coveted the two or three dollars which he had earned in the ring trade, and they believed he was already in their toils. Clapham returned a civil but firm refusal to their soft words, and they desisted, Slocum saying to Hunt, "Never mind now; a week or two more will limber him. Nothing like jail life to take *vartu* starch out of folks."

It was just after this last resistance, and Clapham

Digitized by Google

secretly felt that it was a reward for it, that he espied, among the rubbish swept into a corner of the room, the fragments of a pamphlet giving an account of the disasters and wreck of the ship Commerce, on her return from New Spain to the port of New York. Clapham had had one winter's schooling, during one of his father's long absences from home, and he had then learned to read and spell words of two syllables. By an hour's effort, he made out the title. It struck on his memory, and recalled many adventures he had heard his father relate of a certain ship Commerce in which he had been wrecked when a child. Here, Clapham thought, was a chance of learning to read, if he would work hard; and, stimulated by his curiosity to ascertain if the pamphlet really contained the stories recounted by his father, he set to the task. The print was small and blurred, and, in many places, rendered quite illegible by dirt-stains. The first two pages were merely prefatory, and filled with commercial and nautical terms, which greatly increased Clapham's difficulty. He persevered, however, and in one week he read those two pages. And, though many a time his head

Digitized by Google

ached, and his eyes were misty, it was by far the shortest and pleasantest week he had passed since Deleau left the jail. The next week, he went on better; and now he came to the incidents, in a different form, of which his father had retained and related his indistinct impressions. The name of Felix Hale, second mate, frequently recurred. His daring in various exploits was noted; his fair dealing and generosity to the crew were dwelt on; and the particulars of his death, which occurred during a contest with a privateersman, in defending a woman, the only passenger in the ship, were minutely given. The account of him concluded as follows: "Thus. by a fatal stab in the back, we lost the best man in the ship — honest to his last farthing; true to his last word; brave as Julius Cæsar; and tender-hearted as a woman. He had married in New Spain, and his wife died there, leaving a son, whom he was bringing to New York. When the Commerce was wrecked, and we escaped by night, in the long-boat, this little chap was asleep below with old Norman Dunn, who had adopted him, and given him his name. The boat was already overloaded, and,

Digitized by Google

as the man was old, and always drunk when ashore, and the boy would be better off in Abraham's bosom, all hands agreed not to wake them. The Commerce was never heard of after."

Clapham spelt through these last sentences, his heart throbbing as if it would leap from his bosom. He recalled distinctly Norman's graphic description of awaking one morning, and finding himself alone on the wreck of the vessel with his father, (the old sailor who adopted him,) and his saying that, after a few days' heaving about, they were taken off and carried to England. He seemed to have forgotten his real father, with whom he had had brief intercourse. The rough old sailor took him from port to port, and finally, dying at sea, the boy was sent to a small seaport on Long Island Sound, in Connecticut. There, at the age of eleven years, a solitary and dropped link from the chain of humanity, he was found by the overseers of the poor, and sent to school. He could not bear its restraints, and ran away into the interior; and from that time he led a roving and lawless life.

To return to Clapham. He was assured that this

Digitized by Google

Felix Hale was his grandfather; that there was good blood in his veins; that his grandfather was a true and honest man, honored and loved. It was a proud and happy day for the poor boy, and many and many a time he said over to himself, "Felix Hale's blood is in my veins. I know it is. I always did hate to lie and steal, like poison."

Again and again he read over the fragmentary leaves. He had them every word by heart. After that, the reading naturally became tiresome. Again he besieged Plum to give him something to do, and again was surlily repulsed. Again he besought a book of the jailer, and was again denied. Two weeks more of idleness passed away. His health suffered. The room, never ventilated, was noisome. His head continually ached, or had a heavy, confused feeling, worse than pain.

Slocum and Hunt never forgot Clapham's money. Their appetite for rum and tobacco reminded them of it; and one unhappy day for Clapham, when he was looking paler and more haggard than usual, his eyes half closed, and his neglected leaves lying beside him,

Digitized by Google

Slocum called to him, "Come, Clap, draw up, and look on; there's no harm in that, my man. We'll be frindly, the same as if you'd never snubbed us."

"I may as well!" thought Clapham; "I shall die lying here, hearing nothing, seeing nothing, nothing to do. I have tried my best." He had tried manfully; but no one should ever cease trying. He drew near to them. It was this first movement that led to the evil that followed. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." But resist to the end. Clapham looked over that game, and another, and another. He began, unconsciously, to feel an interest, and, as soon as he perfectly comprehended the game, to hope that Hunt, whom he disliked less than Slocum, would win. There was usually a small bet pending. The pies, nuts, tobacco, and cakes, received from their outside friends, supplied the means of making them.

The second day, he answered to their invitation more promptly. "I got no harm yesterday," he thought, "and why should I to-day? It does make the time pass."

"You are a smart lad, Clap," said Slocum, after

Digitized by Google

Clapham had been looking on an hour or two. "I'll bet you, Hunt, he could play a game now, without a miss."

"He play! Your granny, as well," replied Hunt, with an air of great contempt.

"Well, I'll bet on him. Try, just once, Clap."

Clapham, provoked by Hunt doubting his capacity, took the cards.

"What's the use of betting with me?" said Hunt; "I've got nothing, and less. What do you say, Clap, for our side. Will you venture six cents against Slo's six apples? You've the chink, you know. Come, don't hold back, don't be tight. We are all, but you, as poor as church mice. Well, if you are so close, twelve apples to your six cents."

"I don't care for the six cents," said Clapham. He hesitated from a foolish dread of their ridicule, if he told them he did not like to bet. He had sense enough to fear that betting would draw him in to play more with them. "But never mind; it is but once," he thought; 'just to see if I can play without a miss; and I don't want them to think me mean." He took the cards.

Digitized by Google

Ah, Clapham, if you had but thought then, "The thing is to do right, and then it matters not what others say or think." They had caught him. Clapham took the cards; they exchanged winks, and he proceeded to give his whole mind to the game. He played it right, and won it, and won the apples into the bargain. He felt the pleasure of excitement. It was a new world to him. No more consciousness of headache; no more drowsiness, nor dulness. He continued playing till it was so dark he could not see a spot on the cards. Slocum and Hunt were good-natured all day. After they had instructed Clapham in "All Fours," they taught him "Loo;" and Clapham dreamed all night of "Flusher," and "Blaser," of "Great Loo" and "Little Loo;" and when he arose in the morning, he was as eager to go to the cards as they were to have him.

Betting was now a regular thing with every game. Clapham had resolved not to stake more than six cents at a time. That, he thought, was a small risk; and, as they won his money, they staked cash against cash. Clapham lost oftener than he won; but he was not

Digitized by Google

aware how much the luck run against him, till towards the close of the week, when, on counting over his money, he found but fifty cents remaining.

He had scarcely won a game that day. A suspicion of foul play dawned upon him. He began to realize that gaming was a bad business for him, and, like many older gamblers, he resolved that, as soon as he had won back his money, or detected the fraud he suspected, he would give up playing. "I must, at any rate," he said to himself, "hold on till I find out if they cheat me." They had gone on cheating so successfully that they were not on their guard. Game followed game, and on each Clapham lost his sixpence. He became almost sure that he perceived where the fraud was. His heart beat so that he was afraid they would perceive it; but he kept himself apparently cool till he was certain, and then, striking Slocum's cards out of his hands, he exclaimed, "It's no play. You've cheated in the deal. I saw you!"

"You lie!" cried Slocum.

"Let him lie!" said Hunt. "Here is his last sixpence. We've wound him up."

Digitized by Google

"You've cheated me out of my money, and I'll get it again," said Clapham, irritated by his losses, by their cheating, and still more by their triumph.

"Take that," said Slocum, spitting on him; "that's all you'll get again." Clapham sprang to his feet, and struck Slocum a blow in the face that made the blood spout from his nose. Enraged, he flew at Clapham. Clapham did not give an inch, and, striking blow after blow, they came to the floor together. There was a general uproar in the room. The card-table was overthrown; a jug of rum was overturned and spilled; the cards were scattered; pennies and apples rolled over the filthy floor. One man cried out that it was not fair play. Man against boy. Hunt declared no one should interfere; and such was the hubbub that no one was conscious that the door was opened, and that the jailer entered, followed by a young man, till the visitor said, in a thrilling voice, "*Clapham Dunn!*" and Clapham sprang from Slocum to his feet. His flushed face turned deadly pale, and, staggering to the wall, he groaned out, "O Harry Davis!"

Digitized by Google

His eye met Harry's. He turned away his face, and loaned against the iron bars of the window. Harry did not see the hot tears that streamed over his cheeks. He saw nothing but the signs of his degradation and ruin. His long, dark, curling hair was a snarled mass, gray with lint and dust; his begrimed skin had that sallow, dingy, parchment hue infallibly contracted in a neglected prison. His clothes, none of the best when he left his wretched home, had not been since changed, and were now black, greasy, stiff, and ragged at all points. The mountain friend, the boy of Rhigi's lovely woods, with his shining curls and ruddy cheeks, and voice ringing out clear as the birds that sang around him, the favorite of "little Lucy," passed, for one moment, in vision before Harry. His eye ran over the disgusting apartment; his head turned, and he became sick and faint. It was partly the fetid air of the room, but more the shock of his disappointment. He turned back into the passage, and the jailer relocked the door. The sound struck like a sentence of final judgment on Clapham's ear, and he fell senseless on the floor.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

A DYING CONFESSION.

"Justice, alas! has given him o'er,
And mercy's day is gone."

We are compelled to recede three weeks in our story, to the moment of Harry's exit, with the poor book-keeper, from Holson's shop. Harry half supported, half dragged him to his melancholy home — an upper story of a small house in Mulberry Street. His wife, sick in body and feeble in mind, was incapable of assisting him; his children, excepting the lame boy, too young, and he too weak to help himself. So Harry was compelled to remain till late the next morning. Carey was in a state of stupor which the physician said threatened paralysis. That only could be averted by care; and care he had, unsparing care, from Harry. He brightened about twelve, and Harry hastened home to render an account of himself.

Digitized by Google

The door was opened by Mary Hale, who was evidently on the watch.

"O Harry!" she exclaimed, "where have you been? Aunts will be so glad!"

"And you did not care at all, Mary, what became of me?"

"Harry Davis!" she exclaimed, reproachfully; and she ran, blushing, away to proclaim his return to aunts Peace and Plenty.

Such was their anxiety at Harry's unaccountable absence, that neither of the good ladies had gone to church — "a thing," as they said, "that had not happened before in their lifetime."

Harry's next movement was to call on Mr. Nevis, and confide to him the scene in Holson's shop. Mr. Nevis immediately proceeded to Holson's, accompanied by a police officer, but Holson was gone. He had absconded during the night, (having first burned his books,) with such of his effects as he could take with him. The next day, his gay shop windows were closed, the door barred, and the ominous words, "To let," advertised the public that the incessant impor-

Digitized by Google

tunities, the false showings, and petty frauds of John Holson were at an end; that the most laborious industry, without integrity, will not prosper; that, in short, *dishonesty is the worst policy.*

We give another extract from a letter of Harry's.

"It seems to me, dear mother, that I have lived a year in the last fortnight. On the very Monday that I sent you an account of the upshot at Holson's, Mr. Nevis obtained the promise of an excellent situation for me with Messrs. James Bent & Co., where his son, my friend, already is. Mr. Bent is respected as a man of strict integrity, and every part of his establishment is well conducted; and I am to have a salary of $150. Only imagine how rich I shall be! 'It never rains, but it pours!' Coming out of Mr. Bent's, who should I meet but Mr. Lyman! He has more work on hand than he can do, — making plans and drawings for the first architect in the city, — and he wanted me to help him. Never was any thing more opportune. The place I am to have at Mr. Bent's will not be vacant till next month, and now I can be

Digitized by Google

earning something; and, to tell the truth, mother, I do need a little fitting up for summer."

"Dear mother, I am really enjoying myself now, as much as I think one can ever enjoy in a city. I am afraid I shall never feel at home here, but I really am happy now. I am drawing all day, and all the evening. I get a book from the Mercantile Library, and Mary Hale reads aloud. We are reading now Irving's Columbus, — one of the most charming books ever written, — and Mary's reading is like setting it to music. Mother, her voice is the sweetest you ever heard. It reminds me of little Lucy's. And when she sits under the lamp, the light shining on her beautiful brown hair and white forehead, I — I can hardly keep my eyes on my drawing. Mary has received her education at one of the public schools, and you would be astonished to know how much she has acquired, and how well. Her good aunts are not fond of reading; they stay in the little front parlor, where their tongues go at both ends; but, bless them! they never speak an evil or an unkind word. Old Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Bland, who loves a book above every thing, sits in the back parlor with us and listens, and teaches her poor little blind grandchild to sew and knit. Would you not like to look in upon us, dear mother? I should be perfectly happy if I were out of a city. If I were, dear mother, where I could see Mount Rhigi, and hear the sound of a brook; and if — O, what an if! — if Clapham was what he seemed to us when little Lucy died, and was out of that old jail."

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM HARRY'S MOTHER.

"Your present, my dear son, was very acceptable, as a proof of your abiding and ever-thoughtful love; but do not send me any thing more at present. Keep your earnings for your summer's outfit. We want for nothing. Thanks to a kind Providence, my health is good, and Annie's. There is never lack of work for willing hands; and our wants, except for your afflicted father, are small. His cough is severe, and he declines daily, so that the doctor says he should not be surprised if he dropped away at any minute. His appetite continues remarkably. I

Digitized by Google

might find it difficult to satisfy it, but our kind neighbors send in daily of their best. We have plenty of fresh. To-day, dear old Mrs. Allen sent a quarter of a roaster, and your father ate nearly the whole of it. You know he was always remarkably fond of pig. Our neighbors never let him be out of custards, pies, and preserves. You know, Harry, I never liked to call on my neighbors for watchers in sickness, and think that, in most cases, it's much better doing without them; but father feels different. He likes company, he says, when he is awake, and I am no talker. He is able yet to engage his own watchers. He borrows the sheriff's old horse, and jogs round after them. I don't oppose, though I sometimes fear he will die on the road; but it serves to divert him.

"O Harry, you will have feelings when you read what I have now to write to you! Last evening, about nine, Norman Dunn was found lying on the ground, at the tavern steps. At first, they supposed he was drunk; but it proved that he was sick, worn

Digitized by Google

out with travelling afoot, and, indeed, nigh unto death. They got him on to a bed, and, as soon as he revived, he asked to have me sent for. O Harry, he was an awful sight to behold, with his long, black beard, and livid face, and swollen eyes. I supposed he wanted to hear about Massy's death; so I told him she did not suffer for any thing, and how the selectmen had her brought down to the village, and she had good watchers every night, and I was with her at the last, for the sake of Clapham. He did not give me the least attention, but kept moving and worrying till I mentioned Clapham; then he rose right up, and said, 'Stop there; don't talk about Massy; she's dead, and gone to the d——l, for what I care.' (Only think, Harry, what a hardened sinner!) 'But Clapham! it's for his sake I have dragged here more dead than alive; and, while breath lasts, let me tell you how I wronged him. Your own boy, Harry, was not better than my boy; nor so good; for Clapham had the devil always at his elbow, and was good in spite of it I was the devil to him — I, his father!'"

Mrs. Davis then went on to write the particulars

Digitized by Google

Norman gave of his having forced poor Clapham, in his childhood, to accompany him on his marauding expeditions among hen-roosts and clothes-lines. He then told the whole story of the robbery, — every particular, every word, with which our readers are already acquainted, — and, in conclusion, said, "And I let him be accused — my own child, and such a boy — and be taken off to jail, just because I could not bear shutting up out of the fresh air. But I have tried to right him at last — I have. I've walked forty miles since I thought every step would be my last. Now let them send for Squire Avery, and you tell the story, and I'll swear to it, and then I'm done."

The magistrate was immediately sent for, a deposition made, and the oath administered to Norman. After that, he sank away, and died before morning, without sign of repentance towards God. Unhappy man!

Mrs. Davis's letter thus concluded: "Only think, my dear son, how we, his best friends, and his true friends, have wronged this poor boy. I always had feelings for him. He was somehow bound up in my

Digitized by Google

heart with little Lucy; and I have daily remembered him in my prayers Annie is the happiest girl you ever saw. She cried for joy. But we must do something more than feel, or pray, or cry, Harry. Every one says that steps should be taken for Clapham; but no one takes them. What is every body's business is nobody's. Now, my son, as you have a week before you enter on your new clerkship, had you not best come home and see about getting up a petition to the governor for Clapham's pardon? I know it will be an expense, and neither you nor I have spare shillings. But sometimes we must *not* count the cost. Annie and I have laid by a few dollars against a call for mourning, that must soon come; that is at your service; and you, my son, can wear your old hat till you can earn a new one; and so, among us, we can make it out, and neither borrow nor beg. But I leave you to decide."

Harry did decide, without hesitation; and the very next day found him at the door of the prison in L——.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

THE REUNION.

"Sorrow endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

When Harry, after his sudden retreat from Clapham's presence, recovered his self-possession, "How long," he asked the jailer, "has Clapham Dunn been in this way?"

"What way?"

"Why, playing cards, and drinking, and quarrelling?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. They mostly fall to it as soon as they have a chance. I never noticed the lad in partic'lar, but they are all birds of a feather; and I can tell you there's no partic'lar credit in keeping up an acquaintance with them, in partic'lar, for young folks that haven't any settled character in partic'lar." The jailer accompanied his advice with

Digitized by Google

a knowing wink, which did not make it the more pleasing to Harry.

"I have no fears," he said, "about my character suffering."

"O, I dare say not. Young folks are never afeard of nothing; but see, if you lay dirty clothes and clean together, the dirty clothes don't get any the cleaner that ever I heard of, and the clean ones get rather frouzy. You can't teach me nothing about these kind of cattle; after they once get under my lock and key, there's an end on 'em."

"Most likely," thought Harry, "and that is a reason why they should be got from under your lock and key as soon as possible. I still wish to see this Clapham Dunn," he said.

"Well, you must take it out in wishing. I can't no how attend to you this afternoon. Saturdays is busy days. I must be going."

"I will come again, then, to-morrow morning, early."

"You need not trouble yourself to come so very early," said the jailer, rudely. Sunday is a day of rest, and I don't turn out with the sun."

Digitized by Google

"Is this the man," thought Harry, as he left the prison, "selected to take charge of the sick — 'the sick and in prison,' — the worst sickness — sickness of the soul?"

On the whole, the delay was no disadvantage, except that it left poor Clapham pining and despairing, and believing that the last ray of hope had vanished from him. Harry went to look after a certain Mr. Norton, a very flourishing carpenter in L——, a distant relative of his mother. Mr. Norton received him most kindly, and insisted on his staying at his house; and, during the evening, they had much conversation that had an important influence on Harry's destiny. Mr. Norton fully sympathized with Harry's hopes, and encouraged them. "Such a boy as you describe this Clapham," he said, "who so early resisted bad influences, cannot have been ruined by a few months in jail, though he may have lost ground. It is a sad place, I believe."

"Have you never been in it, sir?" asked Harry, with some surprise.

"No, I never have." He was silent for a mo-

Digitized by Google

ment, and then added, "To my shame I confess it, I never have."

At eight o'clock, the next morning, Harry could restrain his impatience no longer. He was again at the jail. After he had waited a long while, the jailer came, gaping and grumbling. "It was trouble enough," he said, "to take care of the rascals, without waiting on their comrades."

Harry, without noticing his ill-humor, asked if he could speak with Clapham alone.

"I guess," he answered, "it will be a job to get him to speak at all. One of the fellows told me he had not spoke nor ate since you was here. Them that drinks and fights always have their sulky turns."

Harry again asked if he could see Clapham alone, and the jailer said, "yes, there were lock-up places enough empty, but he should not trust him with his old mate without turning the key." At this moment, Mr. Norton, who had followed Harry, entered.

"You are quite mistaken in this young man, Patten," he said; "he is a relation of mine. Give him a decent room to see his acquaintance in, and

Digitized by Google

while he is talking with him, let me go in to see your prisoners."

The jailer's manner changed instantly. He went eagerly for Clapham, and, shaking him, he said, "Come, wake up, uncover your face."

"Do let me be," replied Clapham, drawing the coverlet again over his face.

"You do look ghastly!" said the jailer. He did. His face was pale, his lips were blue, and the blood had mingled with the tears and run over his face, neck, and hands. "You *are* a scarecrow," continued the jailer; "but come; they're wanting you out here."

"Who? who wants me?" cried the poor boy, now throwing off the cover and starting up.

"That youngster that was here last night."

"Has he come? Does he want to speak with me?" exclaimed Clapham, springing to his feet, and towards the door; and when it was opened, he said not a word, but he looked Harry steadily in the face, and his soul was in his eye. Harry grasped his hand, and Mr. Norton said, almost aloud, "There's good in the Rhigi boy!"

Digitized by Google

Two hours passed before Clapham and Harry again separated; and in that time Clapham related all that he had suffered, thought, and felt, since they parted on the mournful day of little Lucy's burial. He did not try to palliate his fault in the jail. It was Harry that thought of the palliation. When Harry spoke of the death of Clapham's parents, a deep gloom overshadowed him, and he was silent and downcast for a few moments; then a sudden gleam lit up his face, and he said, "But, Harry, I have some honest blood in my veins, and my poor father, perhaps — perhaps if he had been cared for as I have — if he had had a Harry Davis for a friend, he might have turned out very different." Clapham then related how he had discovered his progenitor. "So you see, Harry," he concluded, "I have a fair name to begin upon — Hale. Hale is a good name, isn't it?"

"Hale!" exclaimed Harry, his face lighting up with an expression Clapham did not quite understand; Hale is the pleasantest sounding name in the world." *Mary Hale*, if he had spoken the whole truth, he should have said.

Digitized by Google

When the boys parted, Clapham said, "O Harry, if all the land on Rhigi had been given to me, and leave to fish and hunt with you for life, I should not be so happy as I now am."

"Almost as happy as I was, Clapham," replied Harry, "when I received my mother's letter containing the account, from your father's lips, of the robbery. I always felt that you had no *heart* in it; but to know that I could prove my faith by your works was joy beyond telling."

At this moment, the cup of both boys was brimming with well-earned happiness.

Before Harry left L——, it was settled between him and Mr. Norton that Deleau should be written to for a testimonial of Clapham's good conduct while Deleau was in the jail. Very favorable testimony Mr. Norton had already obtained from a sharp questioning of Hunt, Slocum, and Plum. Prepared with all this evidence in Clapham's favor, and with the document made from Norman Dunn's dying confession, Mr. Norton did not doubt he should obtain an immediate pardon from the governor. Ten days after, he wrote

Digitized by Google

to Harry, "My dear young friend, the thing is done. The governor cheerfully granted the pardon, and Clapham *Hale* is now my indented apprentice, and a member of my family. You might, but few others would, know the Rhigi boy in his new Sunday, or even his working-day, suit. 'He shows blood,' as they say, — the blood of his grandfather, the high-minded Felix Hale. We must confess it was somewhat corrupted in the veins of Norman Dunn. How much of the sin of such corruption lies at the door of those who neglect their duty to orphan and outcast children, is a fearful question.

"My dear cousin, — I am proud to call you so, — Harry Davis, your visit to me has done me, as I humbly hope, great good. I had lived here ten years, within a stone's throw of this jail, and never seen the inside of it. I call myself a Christian. I am a professor. I pray daily in my family for those who are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and yet I have never, till you came here, lifted one of my fingers to loosen these bonds. I pray that missionaries, preaching the good news of salvation,

Digitized by Google

may be sent to the whole human family. I subscribe to charitable societies, — and so I should, as God has prospered me, — and yet I have not done the *duty nearest to me.* If I had, or if my Christian neighbors had, the scenes of filth, idleness, and iniquity in that jail would never have existed to witness against us. I have taken measures to have that rascally jailer removed. They talk of a disinfecting fluid. There should be a moral disinfection in the character of the man who has the care of the tenants of a jail — morally diseased creatures.

"Clapham sends a world of love to you and yours. He has already begun with his evening school, and so earnestly that I am sure he will soon be able to write for himself.

"How much I wish that, instead of the uncertain life of a city merchant, you had chosen to come and learn with me my good trade, which will thrive as long as men live in houses. But wherever you are, God bless you, as He ever does His faithful servants.

"Truly, your obliged friend,

"BENJAMIN NORTON."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVI.

A DECISION.

"My good angel held the scales. Ambition and Wealth were in one scale, Moderation and Contentment in the other. Ambition and Wealth kicked the beam."

EXTRACTS FROM HARRY DAVIS'S LETTERS.

"DEAR MOTHER: It is now three months since I have been with Mr. Bent; and, excepting my poor father's death, life has been all smooth sailing with me. You have been getting on so nicely! Clapham *Hale* giving such complete satisfaction to Mr. Norton, and you and Annie — as appears by your last letter — surprised with his improved appearance and manly bearing. Does he not seem like one of us?

"I have reason every day to feel grateful to Mr. Nevis for my situation at Mr. Bent's. He is a model in his department of mercantile life. He requires

Digitized by Google

of his clerks a strict performance of their duty. They must be up to the mark; and there is the strictest supervision of them. They sign a contract not to go to the theatre, nor to any public places of amusement, excepting during their holidays, when, he says, their parents or guardians take the responsibility from him. They all have salaries in proportion to their capacities for business. Mr. Bent is quite as exact in his duties to them as in his requirements from them. He watches over them like a parent. If a lad is drooping, he gives him a holiday. If he detects a fault, he gives a secret and kind admonition, as if it were his own child he was dealing with. He sees himself to the young men having eligible boarding places; he permits no extra hours, or over-work, unless it is inevitable; he pays all the salaries on the first of each month; he subscribes himself, for the clerks who themselves are not able to subscribe, to the Mercantile Library; he gives a kind word of approbation where it is due, and I think never blames undeservedly; he permits no puffing of the goods, no false shows of any sort;

Digitized by Google

we must be assiduous to his customers, civil and devoted, but never importunate; there is but one price in his shop. In short, dear mother, he spares no pains to give us upright characters, and gentlemanly deportments, and thus prepares us for an honorable career. He does well the duty nearest to him."

"My evenings are passed so pleasantly, mother! Mr. Lyman has been ill in bed for the last month, and I have had the pleasure of making some return to him for all his kindness to me, by finishing, gratuitously, the drawing of plans he had begun. I am always delighted when I have drawing, for then Mary Hale reads to me. You cannot imagine how curious she is to see Clapham, ever since she discovered that he was a distant relation of hers. Not so very distant either, as that Mr. Felix Hale was a brother of her grandfather; so they are second cousins. 'Blood is thicker than water,' say the good aunts; 'and Clapham shall be just as near to us as any of our nephews.'

"'The poor little blind child has been frightfully

Digitized by Google

ill, and Mary Hale was her nurse. I wish, mother, you could have seen the care she took of her, and heard her, when she was getting a little better, and was rather fretful, singing long ballads to her in the dead of the night, and telling her story after story. I think, dear mother, you would have loved her as well —— no, not so well as I do; no one ever can love as I love Mary Hale!

"There it is! a secret that has been for months burning in my heart, and I could not tell it, even to my mother! Don't laugh at me! don't; don't reason with me. I know very well that I am not quite seventeen, and Mary Hale not quite sixteen; and I do not know whether Mary feels at all as I do. I sometimes *guess* and hope; but, dear mother, one thing I am sure of, I shall never be worthy of her."

In another letter, of three months' later date, Harry says, "Dear mother, this letter will both surprise and grieve you. Mr. Bent has failed. After fifteen years of untiring and successful industry, after the most

Digitized by Google

intelligent conduct of his affairs, after having amassed a fortune on which he intended to retire next year, he is ruined by no fault, no misjudgment of his own, but by having heavy responsibilities for other houses, which, in the common course of trade, he could not have avoided. He announced the event to us yesterday, calmly, but with much feeling; and we all felt as if a great misfortune had happened to ourselves. Some of the younger boys actually cried, and the stoutest among us were obliged to wipe our eyes. It is not merely, mother, the loss of money, but the loss of so much power so well used."

"Our salaries have all been paid. Mr. Bent, with an expression of approbation that did not make it easier to part with him, mother, told me he had secured me a place with a friend of his, and an advance of a hundred dollars upon my present salary. You will stare, as did Mr. Bent, when I tell you that I have taken the offer into consideration till to-morrow."

Digitized by Google

"I have declined the clerkship, and renounced city life and mercantile life forever. 'Your reasons, Hal?' You shall have them, my dear mother. From the beginning, city life has been utterly distasteful to me. While I was living here, I could not be so unmanly as to make you uncomfortable with my discontents, and therefore I said nothing about them; and, in truth, my discontents were rather prospective. rather from the belief that my destiny was cast in a city than from my present experience. No country home could have more social virtue than this to which a kind Providence guided me; to say nothing of the rose in my path in perpetual bloom, sweetness, and freshness. But the everlasting noise and turmoil, to one who was bred under the shadow of Rhigi, with no sounds but sweet musical ones from dawn to dawn; walls of brick and mortar, instead of a boundless horizon of beauty; narrow streets, for our planted fields, our lovely Salisbury lakes, mother, our hill sides, and our brook; noisome smells, for the pure, sweet air; and little, wretched yards, for ample space, — and all their country blessings are common bounties,

Digitized by Google

not restricted to the rich man's hoards, but they are the poor man's wealth. *Reason No.* 1, mother.

"From my first experience of retail life in New York, I took a dislike to it — perhaps from the dose I took at Holson's. I presume it will not be denied that men are physically superior to women, and therefore they should have employments to develop and exercise their mortal frames, and leave the retailing of silks and laces, &c., to women and girls, who are really more competent to this business than we are. And what can be more demoralizing, mother, than life in such a shop as Holson's? There are very few, I trust, with such rascals for their proprietors; but there are too many debased by unremitting labor, by eager, selfish competition, by petty frauds and false showings. *Reason No.* 2.

"But there is a commercial life that affords a field for high intelligence, extensive information, and munificent action. Yes, but exposed to unforeseen, inevitable, and cruel reverses. Perhaps my opinions are affected by the shock of my kind friend Mr. Bent's misfortunes. Be it so. The uncertainty of

Digitized by Google

mercantile, — the most uncertain of all uncertain affairs, — makes my *reason No.* 3.

"I might, perhaps, attain a large fortune in New York, but I am not ambitious. I do not think I have an average share of the go-ahead furor of my countrymen. I never dreamed of being president of the United States, governor, judge, or even a member of Congress, — the prize in most men's lotteries. I never desired to rise above the condition in which I was born. That may be your fault, dear mother; you have been so contented with your lot, and have made it so respectable and happy. I do not mean any disrespect to my poor father, but I had early some teaching on foregoing actual competence for possible wealth.

"*I take after you*, dear mother. I am content with the station in which I was born. My purpose and hope is to give to it, by moderate labor, the competence, dignity, and happiness, of which it is susceptible.

"Mary Hale and I were building castles in the air some weeks since. She said that, build how she

Digitized by Google

would, hers settled down in some pleasant, country neighborhood. *Reason No. 4, and final.*"

"Dear mother, I have received an answer to a letter which I wrote to Mr. Norton on Monday. He accepts, most cordially, my proposition to become his apprentice: and offers me, besides, the place of book-keeper, which, in his concern, is a light business, but will give me a support, and the means of adding something to my dear mother's comforts. With Mr Norton's letter came one from Clapham. The fellow is half wild with joy."

"Dear mother, do not blame me. I could not help it. We went down to Greenwood — old Mrs. Bland, Nannie, and Mary and I; and somehow Mary and I strayed away by ourselves; and we were by Sylvan Lake, and the words leaped from my heart to my lips, and I told her I loved her; and she confessed she loved me, and was not ashamed of it."

"Don't think this is child's play, or youthful

Digitized by Google

romance. You know I am no novel reader, neither is Mary Hale. We have loved one another because we could not help it; and when our hearts were melted, they ran together and blended in one, like metal. We shall always be the happier for having one life from this time forth — the same purpose, the same hope, the same memory. Mary cannot be better than she is; but I shall be the better for having this affection to steady me — to check every wild inclination, to make me hate every impure thought. Mother, send us your blessing, and we shall be perfectly happy."

The blessing came, by return of mail, and they were happy.

Digitized by Google

CONCLUSION.

"Nor prince, nor peer, shall have just cause to say,
God shortened Harry's happy life one day."

Six years have passed since Harry Davis went to L—— to learn the carpenter's trade of Mr. Norton. The relation between them proved most happy — justice and liberality on the one side, industry and fidelity on the other. The friendship between Harry and Clapham, nurtured in clouds and storms, throve in sunshine. The six years have passed prosperously in Harry's outer and inner world; and now, at the age of three-and-twenty, and ripened in experience and virtue, we must present him in a new scene.

Imagine, my dear readers, a village called "Bayside" (there is some talk of changing its name to Maryshome) situated on one of the small bays of Lake Erie. The village is on a gentle declivity, sloping down to the bay, and flanked by a wood,

Digitized by Google

cut into, here and there, by rich fields of wheat, where, as the pure breezes pass, you may see the stalks waving around the stumps of recently levelled trees. At one extremity of the village is a little church of rare beauty of proportion and form, and attached to it a cemetery, in which clumps of the original trees of the forest are left standing, their majestic growth giving to it a fitting and beautiful solemnity. At the other extremity of the village is a rustic school-house, with all the modern improvements for ventilating and warming, and surrounded by a play-ground, as it is modestly called, but which, with its ten acres, its walks, and noble trees, and thrifty plantings, better deserves the name of "Park" than many a piece of ground that bears that ostentatious designation. In the centre of the village is a large, convenient establishment for carpentry, bearing on its front the well-known names of "*Davis & Hale.*" From the busy going to and fro to the work-shop, and from the many hands to be seen through its open windows busily employed, it is evidently a most thriving establishment, and the source of supply to

Digitized by Google

the rising towns in the neighborhood. A little retired from the busy village street, and separated by a wide garden, are two very small, neat houses; so small that it is evident the proprietors, who have laid out around them grounds that have the promise of much future beauty, indulge the expectation of enlarging them. But even these humble beginnings are not without the charm of proportion and fitness; and they, as well as the church and school-house, show that Bayside has the advantage of a resident draughtsman, who has both experience and taste in architectural plans. The cemetery and play-ground are indications, too, that a thoughtful and cultivated mind has been employed there. What an enchanting world would the up-springing villages of the rich West present, if an intelligent sense of the beautiful made the "improvements" in harmony with the loveliness of nature!

It is twilight of a fine June evening, and there is a cheerful stir about the village of Bayside. Young fathers and young mothers, young men and maidens, and a few elderly people, (very few there

Digitized by Google

are in these new settlements,) all dressed in their best, are making their way towards one of the twin cottages. They are gathered there. Let us look in. The *suite* of apartments — a kitchen, bed-room, and parlor, all neatly though sparingly furnished — are hung with festoons of wild flowers, wreaths around the windows, wreaths around the doors, and wreaths around the glass; under it stands a table with the honored patrimonial Bible on which the Salisbury family was nurtured. The prettiest wreath of all is made of mosses and white immortals, and it encircles a bridal present from Mr. Lyman — a sweet picture of "little Lucy."

A white rose in full bloom, and a honeysuckle, both brought "from the east," are trained around the window, and send in sweet odors, breathing memories of the Salisbury home.

On one side the parlor, and opposite "little Lucy's" portrait, stands an elderly matron, whose face tells the story of trials patiently and serenely borne, of a quiet conscience, of satisfied expectations, and a heart overflowing with gratitude to Providence.

Digitized by Google

Next her stands her son, the crowning blessing of her life — a pattern of filial devotion, of fraternal affection, and of conjugal happiness. On his other side, and leaning on his arm, is a lovely young woman, who wears over her bright brown hair a cap half matronly, half girlish — a sort of token that a piece of furniture belongs to her which may be seen through the open door of the bed-room, where a cradle is jogged by a girl whose face is bright with happiness, in spite of the green ribbon over the eyes which "blind Nannie" always wears.

Standing in the door-way is a man somewhat past middle age, a perfect impersonation of hilarity. He must be a Frenchman. There is a sort of "I told you so" look upon his face. His arms are folded, and his fingers are playing a tune on his arms which he can hardly await the finishing of a ceremony then going on to enact with lips and feet.

It is a bridal ceremony. Thrilling memories, blending with joy, gratitude, and hope, have lit up the bridegroom's cheek with a color so brilliant, and given to his rich, dark eye such a glow, that the

Digitized by Google

carpenter of Bayside might be mistaken for a hero of romance. But the pretty, blooming bride beside him, clad in white muslin, and decked with white roses, is no heroine —

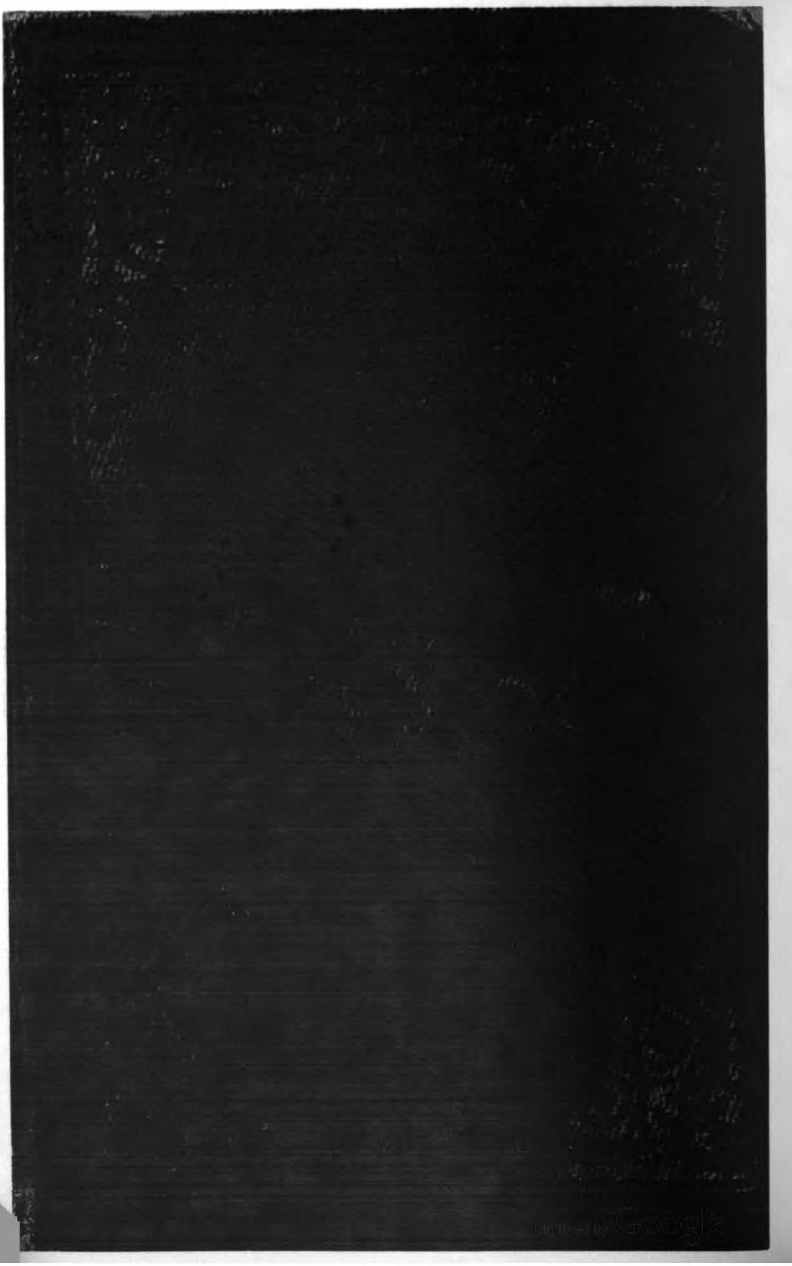
> "Not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food,"—

but fitted for life, — holidays, working-days, and all, — and an image of its dearest contentments. She extends her hand to receive the wedding ring. It is of hair set into a gold hoop; and interwoven in the hair is the name of "*Annie.*"

As the bridegroom slides it on to her finger, he recalls the dark day in the prison of L—— when he made it, and breathes a fervent thanksgiving for the manifold mercies that have since been showered on "*The Boy of Mount Rhigi.*"

30470-2 Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

3 2044 025 681 255

Digitized by Google